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ASTOR. LENOX AND
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A YOUNG SYRIAN GENTLEMAN.

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MARTYR OF LEBANON.

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BY

REV. ISAAC BIRD.

WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY REV. JOEL HAWES, D. D.

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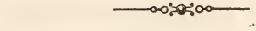
INTRODUCTION.



This is an exceedingly interesting and instructive little volume. It narrates the brief history of a young man of rare natural endowment and of high intellectual culture, considering the circumstances in which he was trained; one whose conversion to Christ was strongly marked, and who showed the sincerity of his piety by a life of singular meekness and patience in the midst of extreme persecution and suffering for Jesus's sake, closed by a martyr's death. The simple facts of his history, told in a neat beautiful style by one who had personal knowledge of most of them, possess the charm of a sacred romance, and can not be read without stirring the deep feelings of the heart, and impressing the mind with a new and deeper conviction of the power of divine grace, and of the beauty and excellence of true religion. I need not indicate the lessons of truth and piety which it is adapted to teach. These can best be learnt from the narrative itself; and I heartily commend the little volume to all who would study an example of earnest persevering seeking after religion in the midst of the most discourag-

ing circumstances; who would learn the nature and effects of true conversion as produced by the Spirit of God, and what it often costs those to become Christians who are obliged to break away from the errors and superstitions of a corrupt church, and to follow Christ in the midst of opposition from parents and friends and the denunciation of a bigoted, and persecuting priesthood. An admirable example to illustrate all this is here presented in the memoir of the life and death of Assad esh Shidiak. May it have a wide circulation; for I am sure it is fitted to do good wherever it may go, and to every one that may read it.

J. HAWES.

HARTFORD, 1864.

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THE MARTYR OF LEBANON.

CHAPTER I.

Our Lord's prediction of persecution — Its thorough fulfillment.

IN the progress of the war for independence in the United States, an American commander appeared, on one occasion, before a stronghold of the enemy, and demanded its surrender. When this was refused, he turned immediately to his men, and said, "Come, my brave lads, *some of us must die*."

It was an uncommon speech. Some would say it was an *imprudent* speech. But how many are there who have ever thoughtfully remarked that the Lord Jesus Christ, when he sent out his men to conquer the world, made to them a very similar speech? "Behold I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves. Ye shall be hated of all men for my name's sake.

They shall deliver you up to councils, and in their synagogues ye shall be beaten, and it shall come to pass that whosoever killeth you, will think that he doeth God service."

Our blessed Lord, knowing, as he did perfectly well, what was in men's hearts, saw clearly what an excitement there would be when those hearts and the doctrines of his gospel should be brought together, and he thought it wise and prudent thus to inform his disciples beforehand what they were to expect.

All that the Saviour foretold in this remarkable speech came literally to pass. Wherever the apostles went, they found that they had need to "beware of men," insomuch that it is generally reported and believed that they all, or nearly all, came to their death by the violence of persecution. Vast numbers, also, of the *followers* of the apostles have been treated in a similar manner; and we may truly say that there has been no age of the world, since the Saviour uttered his solemn prediction, when there have not been found wicked and cruel men enough to fulfill it.

This most eminently unchristian work was

begun by the Jews. First, they shed the blood of the Great Master himself, and next, they proceeded to vex and destroy, as they were able, all them that were like him. Stephen, who was full of the spirit of Christ, and commonly called the first martyr, they stoned to death. To please them, evidently, James, the brother of John, was killed with the sword. To please them, Peter was thrust into prison, and was saved from death only by a miracle. And so they went on, "breathing out threatenings and slaughter against the disciples of the Lord," and making havoc of them, till a great number, who had fled from Judea, were found as refugees among the surrounding gentiles.

Yet here again the fugitives experienced the truth of the Saviour's declaration. They had escaped from the Jews, but not from persecution. They soon perceived that pagan hearts and Jewish hearts were very much alike. When they saw the people around them wholly given to idolatry their spirit was stirred within them, and they could not keep silence. They could not help telling the people "that they be no gods that are made with hands," and that

the Lord Jesus Christ was the only Saviour of sinners. In publishing these new doctrines they were accused of doing contrary to the decrees of Cæsar, and so the Cæsars became their persecutors. Of these, a long list, with Nero at their head, put forth their kingly power, at different times, as if determined to destroy every Christian in the Roman empire. Thousands and tens of thousands were slain, by the sword, by fire, by wild beasts, or by other means almost as various and cruel as human ingenuity could invent.

But the Jewish power and that of the persecuting Cæsars, soon passed away. The Jews were driven from their land, and scattered over the world; the Cæsars threw away their idols, and embraced the gospel. Who, then, is there now, we might reasonably ask, — who is there now left to persecute the disciples of Christ, and to confirm more fully the truth of his prediction? From what quarter of the world will the Prince of Darkness raise up another power to carry on the bloody work of the Jew and the pagan? That prince is fruitful in resources. He raises up the power in question *from the*

midst of Christendom itself, — a power far more lasting and terrible than either of the two preceding. It began to show itself twelve hundred years ago, and has continued to live and operate ever since. Its chief seat is Rome, the city of Nero and the other persecuting Cæsars. It sits upon their throne, and copies and improves upon their example. *They* slew their thousands, but this new power has slain its millions. Moreover, it pursues with special fury the most devoted and holy among Christians, and yet has the face to call itself Christian.

It is not reasonable to suppose that a power of this kind could remain hid from the view of the apostolic prophets whom God permitted to look into the future, and see the coming trials of the church. Accordingly, we find them speaking of the "Man of Sin" that was about to be revealed; of the "Son of Perdition," who was to "oppose and exalt himself above all that is called God;" of that "Wicked One whose coming is after the working of Satan, with all power, and signs, and wonders;" of the vile woman sitting upon seven hills, whose name was "Babylon, the mother of harlots and

abominations," and who was "drunken with the blood of saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus."

This mother of harlots is still powerful, though she has not now the power she once had. There was a time when all Europe trembled at her voice. She could force mighty kings to come and bow down at her feet, and then kick off their crowns to show her contempt. She could stir up great quarrels between nations, and set them by the ears in war, and then bring them together again to make peace on terms of her own liking. Not satisfied with the power of governing Europe, she has claimed and still claims the right to interfere in regulating not only the *religious*, but even the *political* affairs of all mankind. For this purpose, she sends out her priests and other agents to different nations, to induce them to acknowledge her authority. By every means in her power, sometimes by flattery and favor, and sometimes by force of arms, she has, in part, succeeded. She has, in almost every part of the globe, some who have yielded to her seductions, and who now profess her faith.

Of the many foreign people among whom she has had considerable success, it is to the present purpose to mention only one, namely, the people of Mount Lebanon, in Syria. The Maronites, who are the most influential sect inhabiting this extensive mountain range, have acknowledged the authority of Rome in their religious affairs for the last six hundred years. They have not indeed adopted all the doctrines of Rome, but there are *three* very important ones, and very mischievous ones, about which they seem to have no doubts. First, that it is their duty to destroy heretics; secondly, that the civil rulers are in duty bound to assist the priests in this work; and, thirdly, that the Bishop of Rome has the right of government over all the human race.* The chief priest of Lebanon, as the Maronite patriarch might be called, some twenty years since, gave full evidence by his acts, that *he* believed in the right of the priesthood to put down heresy by excom-

* Within the present generation, one of the Romish patriarchs on Mt. Lebanon put forth a proclamation against the Protestant missionaries, in which he used the following words: "We, by the grace of God, are Roman Catholic, yielding subjection to the (Roman) pontiff, and acknowledging him not merely to be Bishop of Rome, but *general director and head of the whole habitable world.*"

munications, and by curses,* and even by the taking of life itself.

What added greatly to the weight and terror of these excommunications and curses among the people was, the circumstance that the prince (the Emeer Besheer) to whom all sects and tribes on the mountains were subject, was himself a Maronite. And he was a ruler of no common stamp; one with whom no power in Lebanon could contend. Being descended from an ancient noble family, a family that belonged to an Arab tribe famous in history,† and having a personal appearance which could not be looked upon without inspiring profound awe in every beholder, he probably seemed to the people to be a man created to be a prince, and to exer-

* On one occasion, this patriarch, having excommunicated the family of one of his sheikhs, follows them afterward with a curse, in the following style: "They are accursed, cut off from all Christian communion; and let the curse envelop them as a robe, and spread through all their members like oil, and shiver them in pieces like a potter's vessel, and wither them like the fig-tree cursed by the mouth of the Lord himself. Let the evil angel rule over them, to torment them day and night, asleep and awake, and in whatever circumstances they may be found. They are thrice accursed. Let the wrath of the Holy Trinity be upon them. We pray the Lord of hosts to cause their footsteps to slide, and to sweep away their dust as chaff before the wind."

† He was of the Shehab family, tribe of Koreish.

cise his authority over them with a special, *divine right*. His education also, in the court of his predecessor, had eminently fitted him for his station. His word was law; and in all his measures which concerned his own subjects only, he generally, if not always, succeeded. But he was a prince that inspired fear and dread as well as reverence, for, to accomplish his purposes, he could, upon occasion, trample upon all law, human and divine.

CHAPTER II.

Assad Shidiak's early life — His education at Ain Waraka — His poetry — Residence with his bishop — With an emeer — With a patriarch — With a Druze sheikh — With another patriarch — Writes against the missionaries.

AMONG such a people as has been here described, and under such a government, civil and religious, Assad Shidiak,* the subject of this brief history, had his birth and education.

His birthplace, and where he passed the most of his life, was Hadet, a small village near the foot of Lebanon, and a few miles from the city of Beirut. He grew up in the midst of the errors and vain traditions of the Maronite people around him.

* This name, in conformity with the Arabic, has generally been written with a different spelling; but the above mode has been here adopted as being more suitable to the eye and the speaking organs of the English reader.

Some persons, interested in the study of the languages, may like to know that the word *As-aad* (or *Assad*) answers to the name *Felix*, and that *Shidiak* is but an abbreviation of the Greek word Αρχιδιακονος (*archdeacon.*)

According to his own account of his boyhood, he was accustomed, when a lad, to join with his brothers and other companions in frequent superstitious observances, or what might, perhaps, more properly be termed *religious amusements;* such, for example, as kindling bonfires for the saints, and rushing through the flames, shouting the saint's name; going through with certain ceremonies in the night, which, it was told them, would set the stars and moon to dancing; or bringing out their pans and kettles and drums, to frighten away the monster that was attempting to swallow the sun or the moon, when it was eclipsed, and so on.

As he advanced in age, he showed such a capacity and fondness for learning, that his elder brothers (his father having died) gave him liberal advantages at the common school, and, in addition, instructed him at home, until he was fitted to pass on to the higher branches of academical study.

The college at Ain Waraka was at that time the only institution of the kind of any note among the Maronites, or even in any part of

the mountains. At the age of sixteen, Assad became a member of this college, where he remained nearly three years, applying himself with great diligence to the various branches of learning taught in the seminary, which were the Arabic and Syrian languages, rhetoric, and natural and theological science.

When he had finished his course at the college, which he did with the highest reputation as a scholar, he returned once more to his native place. There, for a time, he occupied himself in teaching a common primary school. From this position he was promoted to the office of a teacher of theology and moral science to the monks of a neighboring convent, during which time, also, he was permitted occasionally to preach, or to deliver public lectures in the church. His text-book in the instruction of these monks was the theological work of St. Anthony, of Padua, translated into Arabic, the most important part of which work Assad condensed into a valuable abridgment, which is said to be still preserved by the Maronites, and in practical use.

About this time he appears to have shown a

decidedly poetic talent. He wrote a good many short pieces, chiefly in the style of flattery or praise of his friends. Some of these efforts of his genius he himself thought of sufficient merit to be collected together and formed into a book, which thing he did, and the book is still preserved.

One of his poetic epistles, congratulating the Bishop of Beirut on his induction into his office, so pleased the bishop that he invited him, forthwith, to be his scribe. He accepted the invitation, and discharged the duties of the office many months.

In the year 1821, he for some reason left his situation with the bishop, and entered as clerk into the employ of the Emeer Hassan, of the Shehâb family, a relative, of course, of the chief prince. For this step he was much blamed by many of his friends, especially those among the priesthood; and perhaps it may be received as an indication that he was not very devoted in his attachment to his particular church.

He had not long occupied this position when a political disagreement arose between his employer and a neighboring Druze sheikh, who

fell upon the Emeer Hassan, and drove him from his house. Assad also fled, and hid himself through fear. At length he found his way to the patriarch, Yohanna el Hhelloo, then Maronite patriarch at Canobeen, where he found an asylum, and remained a considerable time. The patriarch, however, finally felt himself obliged to dismiss him, at the instance of this Emeer Besheer, who was suspicious of Assad, as being in connection with the party that was then combining against his government.

The fugitive then came down to Tripoli, which is out of the limits of the Emeer's jurisdiction, and found protection with Sheikh Mahmood ed Dessooki. This sheikh had been the Imâm, or prime minister under the Emeer Sulmân Shehâb, afterwards a resident at Hadet, and a friend of Assad.

Between Assad and some of the learned Muslems at Tripoli, there occurred some earnest religious discussions, and some individuals suspected at the time that he was half persuaded to embrace the Mohammedan religion. The suspicion, however, was doubtless unjust; for we have good evidence that, even at this early

period of his religious discussions, he was an able defender of the system of Christianity as opposed to the Korân. The Rev. Mr. Jessup, missionary in Tripoli in 1859, writes, "A Muslem effendi of Tripoli remarked to me in a discussion, 'I have heard of your Christianity before. Years ago there was a great master here, with whom the Muslems could not cope in argument, and he was afterwards put to death by the Maronite patriarch. His name was Assad esh Shidiak.'"

In the following year, Sheikh Mahmood ed Dessooki removed to Damascus. His relatives were there, who, as well as a number of the Shehâb emeers, had fled thither from the vengeance of the Emeer Besheer. Assad accompanied the sheikh to Damascus, and there found among the flying princes, the Emeer Hassan, whom he had previously served, and who now received him again into his family in the same situation as before.

On the 26th of May, 1821, the Emeer Besheer with his mountain forces, appeared near the walls of Damascus, and a battle was fought in which the Damascenes were beaten, and Assad,

and the princes, his friends, betook themselves to a strong building, where they were besieged by their enemies, until Derweesh Pasha, hearing of their situation, sent and relieved them.

The next day, the mountain army having retired, the princes, with Assad in company, went out to welcome the approach of Mustafa Pasha, of Aleppo, who was marching, by way of Damascus, to chastise Abdallah Pasha, of Acre, for rebellion. When Mustafa Pasha, strengthened by the men of Damascus, was on his march southward, through the valley of Merj Aioon, he bestowed the government of that whole district upon the Druze sheikh, Ali el Ammad, who invited Assad to remain with him, and act as his chief agent. He accordingly accompanied the sheikh, first to his residence at Kefr Nebrakh, near Deir el Kommer, and afterwards to his seat of government in the Merj. Here was a post of greater responsibility than he had ever held as a civil officer, but it appears that he fulfilled the duties of it to the entire satisfaction of his employer.

From this situation he removed, the next year, with the sheikh, to Kefr Nebrakh. Here,

perhaps from habits acquired in his late occupation, he found himself wholly given up to the world, like the Yezbec Druzes, among whom he was living, having lost all his aspirations after distinction either in knowledge or in religion.

We may suppose that the sheikh, being now removed from his office as governor of the Merj, and having no longer the same need of an agent like Assad, could no longer afford him a satisfactory salary, and that it was in consequence of this, that the latter, in 1824, retired again, for a time, to Hadet.

He next made application in person, to his old college instructor, Yoosef Habŷsh, now recently elected to the patriarchal chair. He met with a cool reception from his Blessedness, who made him but small offers of wages, and reproached him severely for having left his original place with Bishop Bootrus, to go into the employ of the sheikhs and princes of the land.

Assad nevertheless remained a while with the patriarch, engaged, as it appears, in copying, illustrating, and arranging certain ecclesiastical documents of the patriarchate, which

previously had been nearly unintelligible, and in making out from these a convenient book of church laws for the Maronite nation. His labors in this department were very successful. The fruits of his mind and pen received the patriarch's approval, and have since been adopted for general use in the church. Still he was not happy in his connection with the patriarch. He seems to have been unwelcome and neglected there, and felt constrained in the end to bid his Blessedness adieu and return home. After so many changes, disappointments, and reverses, we may well believe that he came back to Hadet in no very comfortable state of mind.

At this time the fears of the priesthood had begun to be alarmed at the encroachments of Protestantism. Beside English missionaries, there were now four Americans in the country, Messrs. Fisk, King, and Goodell, with the author of these pages, distributing the Bible, and recommending its doctrines among the people of Lebanon. The Maronite patriarch had issued a public proclamation against us, and we had replied to it. When this reply came to the

hands of Assad, he, probably supposing that he could not do a more acceptable service to his patriarch and people than to write it down, set himself at once to the task.

It was the rumor that he was thus engaged, that first brought his name to our notice. The report was, that he was a man of talent, and of high education, one of course who would be likely to perform the work well which he had undertaken. His essay however did not, for some reason, satisfy the dignitaries of the church, and was never made public.

While we were in daily expectation of its forthcoming, near the close of the month of March, 1825, a neighbor of ours came to one of our houses, attended by a friend, whom he begged leave to introduce to our acquaintance. The stranger was a young man, well-dressed, of easy manners, sedate in countenance, and set off by a bright silver ink-horn, which he wore like a pistol in his belt. From all that we saw we readily took him to be a man of superior education, perhaps a clerk of the city governor, or of some of our mercantile establishments. On hearing his name, however, we immediately

recognized it as that of the man who was going to annihilate our reply to the patriarch.

The professed object of his visit was to obtain employment with us as an Arabic instructor. The extravagantly flattering terms in which his friend dwelt on his qualifications were enough to embarrass a common man; but, much to his credit, he appeared to care nothing about them. Instead of taking the least pains to conceal his knowledge of our reply, or his own dissent from it, and, instead of seeking to prevent any suspicion that he might be writing against it, he frankly begged the liberty of examining the original book containing one of our important quotations. In the course of conversation, he remarked that Luther rejected the Epistle to the Hebrews. He probably meant the Epistle of James, and wished, doubtless, to see whether we followed Luther in this respect, and whether we made so free with any part of Scripture as to set it aside, if it could not be reconciled with our preëstablished doctrines. He might wish to be able to say that we had, for this reason, set aside the books of the Apocrypha, since they recommend, among other things, prayer for

the dead. He also made the remark, that some parts of the inspired Scriptures had evidently been lost, as, for instance, that part which contained the quotation "He shall be called a Nazarene." From this he might wish to infer that the Romish traditions may have been taken from inspired Scripture now lost. He concluded his interview with us by inquiring, privately, whether, if he should come to reside with us, we could insure him protection from the patriarch, or the Emeer Besheer, adding that he had for some time past had it in contemplation to come to us, but had been prevented by his fear of the authorities.

It seemed strange that a man who had taken up the pen against us should be really wishing to serve us. He might be an emissary of the patriarch, or might have come to spy out something that he might introduce to advantage in his threatening document. Besides, we were at that time in no particular need of any new teacher. His very gentlemanly appearance, and his apparent frankness and good sense, pleaded strongly in his favor, but we thought it prudent, at that time, to decline accepting his proposal.

We parted under the impression, probably mutual, that we had seen each other for the first and last time. How far from all our anticipations at that moment were the intimacy and Christian relationship between us that were soon to succeed! How little thought we, as he turned to leave us, that in that retiring form we beheld a chosen vessel of the Lord, whom we should yet, many a time, welcome to our board and our bosoms, — one, toward whom thousands of devout hearts, even in distant countries, would ere long be drawn forth in earnest sympathy, and who would at last be honored with a martyr's crown.

CHAPTER III.

Shidiak's connection with Mr. King — He aids in translating, and afterwards copies for circulation, Mr. King's Farewell Letter — Writes against it — Is remarkably awakened in doing so — Comes to Beirut — Leaves by patriarch's order — Comes again, in spite of it.

IT was providentially so ordered that not long after this interview Mr. King should arrive from Jerusalem, and should succeed in securing the services of this young man before he became otherwise engaged. They proceeded together directly to Deir el Kommer, where they were daily occupied for seven weeks on the Syriac language, and animated discussions concerning the doctrines of the gospel, and concerning the differences between these doctrines and those taught by the Romish church. In these discussions, Shidiak proved himself to be not only a well-educated man, but one of the most intelligent men, and most skillful in argument that Mr. King had met with in all the mountains. His candor and

self-command were uncommon. He was always ready to hear as well as to speak, and their disputes were never closed, as religious disputes too often are, in party-heat and increased obstinacy.

One day, after a long conversation about popery and protestantism, in which he was brought to a sort of balance of opinion between the two systems, he rather humorously proposed to decide the question on the principle of lots. So, taking up his Carshun and Syriac New Testament, he said, "The first word that I cast my eye upon, as I open this book, shall be for the Protestants." He opened at random, and cast his eye upon the first word upon the right-hand page, and read thus: "*The Word*, it seemed good to me also, to write unto thee, that thou mightest know the certainty, etc." Luke i. 2. He seemed struck with the passage, as being very appropriate to the Protestants. They made every thing of the Word, distributed the Word among the people, and tried all doctrines by the Word that they might "know the certainty" of them. Then closing the book, he said, "Now I will open for the Pope." He opened, and casting his eye upon the same part

of the page as before, he read, "*Unclean.*" Luke xi. 24. "When the unclean spirit is gone out of a man, he walketh through dry places seeking rest." If he was obliged to acknowledge the former of these passages to be an expressive one, he was obliged to confess the latter to be still more so. If it taught any thing, it was that the Pope, whom he had been wont to esteem so holy, was but an *evil spirit*, who found no place of rest so comortable as in the hearts of wicked men. We know not whether this little incident had any lasting influence on his mind. The falling of lots was, it must be confessed, somewhat remarkable, and to a mind like his, educated among a people accustomed to regard such chances with superstitious reverence, they may have impressed him, more or less, as having been directed by some power more intelligent than chance.

The residence at Deir el Kommer closed on the 3d of August. At this time Assad wrote to the patriarch, inquiring what salary he might expect if he should offer himself, and be ordained to the priesthood. He also suggested to his Blessedness that he might wish to continue

to give instruction in the employ of the American missionaries, adding that he supposed there *would be no objection to this.* He could not but know that the patriarch *would* object to such a course, and there is ground to suspect that his object in making the suggestion was to induce his Blessedness to offer him a generous reward to keep him out of mischief. We have no reason to believe, even from his own account of himself, that at this time he was actuated by any higher than such a worldly motive.

The patriarch sent him a long, and very fatherly reply, reminding him that the ministry required purity of heart and love of souls, that the salary or income of a priest would be according to the locality which he should prove himself worthy to occupy, and so on. "But," he says, "in respect to your childish prattle about teaching the English, beware how you connect yourself in any manner with those men, for upon this we have laid our ecclesiastical curse. Moreover, we have received fresh instructions from the Holy Congregation* (at Rome) urg-

*The Propaganda Society, a society for propagating the Roman Catholic religion.

ing us, with all earnestness, *to persecute those persons in every possible way*, as long as one of them shall remain in the land. How then will it do for us to give you permission, either to teach or to be taught by them ? "

Notwithstanding this eminently paternal letter, Assad came, immediately after its reception, and commenced instructing Mr. Fisk, one of the missionaries, and also assisting Mr. King, who was about to leave the country, in preparing a Farewell Address to his Arab friends. Of this Address, after putting it into a neat, Arabic style, he was employed to write a large number of copies, in order that it might be sent to the many friends acquired by Mr. King during his three years' residence in different parts of the country.

On Monday, September 26, the day of Mr. King's departure, Assad, by request of the mission, commenced an Arabic grammar-school for native boys; grammar being a branch of knowledge very little cultivated in Syria, and confined hitherto almost entirely to a few educated Muslems. The school was quite small, and left him some leisure time even in school

hours; and when out of school, beside giving a little instruction to missionaries, he had a few more hours to himself. Some of these leisure hours he seems to have devoted to composing a refutation of the doctrines contained in Mr. King's address; for he would still fain commend himself to priestly favor, and keep open the way to an easy or gainful situation in his own church.

He had not, however, finished this new effort against the truth, when his conscience was assailed with a sudden and powerful impulse, as if directly from the divine hand itself, and he desisted from his purpose, with a stronger conviction than ever not only of the errors of popery, but of the wickedness of his own evil heart.

So it is that God often arrests men in the midst of their career of opposition to him, and makes their own acts rise up before them, like so many specters, to accuse and confound them. In this way he also prepares them to become, in after time, more fearless and confident in bearing testimony for their divine Master. Paul, from having gone to an extreme in perse-

REV. JONAS KING, D.D., IN ORIENTAL COSTUME.

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cuting Christ, was the better prepared to endure persecution against *himself;* and he felt the more bold and confident in preaching to others, for being able to refer to his own case as an overwhelming proof of the divine condescension and mercy. When he came to Jerusalem, and the Lord assured him that the people of that city would not receive his testimony concerning him, he was loth to believe it. He reasoned thus: "Lord, they know what a violent wretch I have been,—how far I went even beyond them in cruelty and murder against thy disciples. They know that I imprisoned and beat in every synagogue them that believed on thee, and that when the blood of thy martyr Stephen was shed, I stood by and kept the raiment of them that slew him. How can they fail to receive my testimony concerning thee, since I am in myself such an example and witness of thy grace?"

Shidiak had been under the clear light of truth for months, and where it had been brought home impressively to his conscience, so that he had been forced to grapple with it in personal conflict. He had been many times, no

doubt, almost persuaded to be a Christian, but yet we see him still resisting both conscience and reason. He writes to his patriarch, offering to become a popish priest, if it may be with the assurance of a liberal salary; if otherwise, he will keep on in the service of the opposition party. He serves the Protestants in spreading their sentiments, and, on the other hand, wishes to keep in favor with the Romish priesthood and rulers, by destroying the faith which he had been contributing to uphold, and which his conscience and reason evidently approved.

He had now nearly completed the composition of his tract against Mr. King's letter, and was finishing off his last clean copy, when, as he was looking into his Bible for further confirmation of his statements, the Lord arrested him, speaking to him not indeed in audible words, as to Paul, but in the words of the prophet from the hallowed page before him, saying, "Woe unto them that seek deep to hide their counsel from the Lord, and their works are in the dark, and they say, 'Who seeth us, and who knoweth us?' Surely your turning of things upside down shall be esteemed as the

potter's clay. . . Is it not yet a very little while, and Lebanon shall be turned into a fruitful field? . . . And in that day shall the deaf hear the words of the Book, and the eyes of the blind see out of obscurity and out of darkness."

These impressive words, which caught his attention as he was examining the book of Isaiah, seemed spoken expressly to himself. They were like those words that fell from heaven upon the ears of Saul, the persecutor, "Why persecutest thou me?" and he was scarcely less prompt than Saul in answering, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" He cast his paper aside, and touched his pen to it no more.

The exercises of his mind at this period, with some additional events of his history, may be best given in his own words. Commencing with his connection with Mr. King, he remarks: —

"I was at that time very fond of engaging with Mr. King in disputatious conversations, to prove him to be in error; but with none but worldly motives, to display my talents and knowledge, and to acquire the praise of men. After this, I applied myself to reading the Word

of God with intense interest. Now this person wrote a Farewell Letter to his friends, in which he excuses himself from uniting with the Roman Catholic Church. After reading this letter, I found in the Holy Scriptures many passages which made against the opinions of the writer. These passages I selected, and from them and other evidences composed a reply to him. But when I was copying the first rough draught of the same, and had arrived at the last of the objections which, he said, prevented his becoming a member of the Roman Catholic Church, viz., 'That this church teaches that it is wrong for the common people to possess or to read the Word of God, but that they ought to learn from the popes and councils,' I observed that the writer brings a proof against the doctrine from the prophet Isaiah, viz., the words, 'to the law and to the testimony, if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them.'

"While I was endeavoring to explain this passage according to the views of the Roman Catholic Church, with no other object than the praise of men, and other worldly motives, I

chanced to read the twenty-ninth chapter of Isaiah, from the fifteenth verse to the end. I read and was afraid. I meditated upon the chapter a long while, and feared that I was doing what I did with a motive far different from the only proper one, viz., the glory and the pleasure of God. I therefore threw my paper by, without finishing the copy, and applied myself diligently to the reading of the prophecy of Isaiah.

"I had wished to find in the prophets some plain proofs by which to establish beyond contradiction the truth that Jesus Christ is the Messiah so long expected from ancient days,—proofs that might be made use of in answer to Muslems and Jews. While I was thus searching, I found various passages that would *bear* an explanation according to my views, but did not find them sufficient to enforce conviction on others, until I finally came to the fifty-second chapter and fourteenth verse and onward to the end of the next chapter.

"On finding this testimony, my heart rejoiced and was exceeding glad, for it removed many dark doubts from my own mind also. From

that time my desire to read the New Testament was greatly increased, that I might discover the best means of acting according to the doctrines of Jesus. I endeavored to divest myself of all selfish bias, and loved more and more to inquire into religious subjects. I saw, as I still continue to see, many of the doctrines of the Roman Catholic Church, which I could not believe, and which I found opposed to the truths of the gospel, and I wished much to find some of her best teachers to explain them to me, that I might see how they proved them from the Holy Scriptures. As I was reading an appendix to a copy of the Bible printed at Rome by the Propaganda, and searching out the passages referred to for proving the duty of worshiping saints, and other similar doctrines, I found that these proofs failed altogether of establishing these doctrines, and that to infer them from such Scripture texts was even worthy of ridicule. Among other things, I found in this appendix the very horrible Neronian doctrine that 'it is our duty to destroy heretics.' Now every one knows that whoever does not believe that the pope is infallible, is, in the pope's estimation, a

heretic. And this doctrine is not merely that it is allowable to kill heretics, but that we are bound in duty to do it.

"From this I was the more established in my convictions against the doctrines of the pope, and saw that they were the doctrines of the ravenous beast, and not of the gentle lamb. After I had read this, I asked one of the priests in Beirût respecting this doctrine, and he assured me that it was even so as I had read. I then wished to go to some place, though it were to some distant country, that I might find some man of the Roman Catholic Church sufficiently learned to prove the doctrine above alluded to.

"After this, as I was at Beirût, teaching a few Greek youths the Arabic grammar, I received a letter from his Holiness the Maronite patriarch, saying that if I did not cease from all assistance of whatever kind to the English, and that if I did not leave them within one day, I should, by that act of disobedience, fall under the greater excommunication.

"Thinking, as I did, that obeying my superiors in all things not sinful was well and good, I did not delay to leave my post, and so went

to my friends in Ha-det; but still thinking very much on the subject of religion, so that some people thought me beside myself.

"I loved exceedingly to be engaged in religious inquiry; indeed, I took no pleasure in any worldly concerns, esteeming all earthly possessions vain. After this, I received a second letter from his Holiness, in which he said thus: 'After we had written you the first letter, we wrote you a second; see that you act according to it; which if you do, and will come up to us when we come to Kesruân, we will provide you a situation.' But I saw that nothing in which I was accustomed to take delight pleased me any longer, and I returned again, after some time, to Beirût."

He went home on the fifteenth of November, and returned December twelfth, expecting, of course, to incur the patriarch's displeasure, but ready to bear whatever might come of it. For his greater security, a paper of protection was obtained for him from the English consul,* which insured to him, while in our immediate

* We had no American consul at that time in the country.

employment, all the safety and liberty of an English resident.

He now occupied himself in searching the Scriptures, and in discussing religious doctrines, with such intensity of interest as to leave him little time or relish for any thing else. He soon ceased to place any reliance on unwritten traditions; and the Apocryphal books, which he had always been taught to believe to be a part of the Word of God, he soon gave up, as being evidently uninspired. He no longer regarded Christian fathers or councils as unerring guides, and thus he found himself, as to his rule of faith, fairly on Protestant ground.

His friends and acquaintances at Beirût, hearing of his return, and knowing that it was in open disregard of the patriarch's threats, called on him in considerable numbers, that they might know how he justified himself, how he dared encounter such an adversary as the patriarch, and what were his views and intentions. Some called from simple curiosity, some to be instructed, but others to ridicule and dispute. One day, among those that came, was Priest Girgis, an active young priest of the city. He

had been an old acquaintance of Assad, and his fellow-pupil at the college of Ain Waraka. He came, no doubt, as a spy for the patriarch, and, while present, was altogether inclined to rally and jeer his old comrade in relation to his new enterprise. One of the company demanding of Assad what were his plans, and what he hoped to accomplish, the priest took it upon himself to reply, and, raising his voice above all others, said, in a serio-comic style and manner, "I'll tell you what he is going to accomplish. He is going to set himself up for a great reformer. Luther and Calvin and all those bygones are to be nothing to him. Jerome and Augustine and Chrysostom and all the fathers are to be set aside for this modern apostle. The whole church is to be modeled anew. This man is to be over it as chief pontiff, and all the people are to lift up their voices and shout, '*Hosanna to the great prophet and apostle Assad Shidiak.*'" All this, said with suitable emphasis and gesture, was followed by a burst of laughter from those present, in which Assad himself moderately joined. The priest seemed to enjoy the effect of his speech. It was an

easy kind of argument for him to wield, and it was the only kind which he ever attempted to use with his old schoolmate, to recover him out of the snare of the devil.

Another intimate acquaintance of Assad, one who had professed great friendship for him, and had pretended to lament very deeply that the patriarch and priests had so much sway allowed them, came to give Assad a last serious admonition. "This," said he, "is the last time that I intend ever to say a word to you on the subject of religion. I wish, therefore, before you go any farther, that you would pause, and think whether you can meet all the reproach of the world, and all the opposition that will come upon you from the priests and patriarch, backed up by the civil authorities." Assad thought that since it was his *faith* that subjected him to this opposition, and since he could not change his faith without evidence, his friend ought to have produced the necessary evidence to set him right if he thought his course erroneous. He warned him of danger, but did not tell him how he could avoid it. He replied to his friend, that he had made up his mind to meet whatever

evils his believing and doing right might bring upon him. "And now," said he, "if, as you say, you intend never to hold any conversation hereafter with me on the subject of religion, as *you* have counseled *me*, I have a word of counsel to give to *you;* and that is, that you will go and make the subject of religion a matter of serious prayer and inquiry, and see where the true path of life is; and so I would leave you with your conscience and with God."

When his friend had retired, Assad remarked that these people reminded him of one of their late patriarchs, whom he named, who had a very moderate share of understanding, but was quite ambitious to be thought wise. He had one among his bishops who was remarkable for his acuteness and learning, and whose opinions were always received with the greatest respect on all matters relative to religion. The bishop being on a visit one day at the patriarch's, the latter suggested to him a certain passage of Scripture, which he requested the bishop to explain. He complied with the request according to the best of his judgment, but his Holiness tossed his head, saying, "That is not the mean-

ing of it," and then offered the bishop another difficult passage. A second attempt was made, which was as unsatisfactory as the former, and a third passage and a fourth were produced with no better result. The bishop's reasons and illustrations were all swept away by the single sage remark of his Holiness, "That is *not* the meaning of the passage." At last the bishop, quite discouraged, turned, and said, "Your Holiness has proposed to me to answer a number of questions, in all of which, it seems, I have been *wrong*. I would thank your Holiness now to tell me what is *right*." The patriarch was startled at the new ground on which he was put, and immediately changed the conversation. "So," said Assad, "these people find it very easy to tell me I am *wrong*, but when I ask them what is *right* they are silent."

Assad at times remarked that he was full of anxiety, and found no rest for the sole of his foot. In many things he saw the Romish Church to be wrong, and in some things he thought the Protestants were so. He was surprised at the entire quietness in which he perceived that the missionaries rested in their faith. "As for

me," he said, "I seem to be alone among men. There is nobody like me, and I please nobody. I am not quite in harmony with the English in my views, and therefore do not please them; my own countrymen are so much in error I can not please them; God I have no reason to think I please, nor do I please myself."

It was not altogether unpleasant to hear these rather unexpected confessions, and we naturally endeavored to turn off his attention from all sources of consolation other than the Great and Chief Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost.

It was about this time that he made the encouraging remark, that whatever might be said and whatever might be true in respect to the object of the missionaries in coming to Syria, he saw that the doctrines they taught were, in the main, according to truth, and he was more determined than ever to hold on to them.

He complained that wherever he went, and to whomsoever he addressed himself on the subject of religion, they were ready to reply to him, "Ah, it is very well for you to go about talking in this fashion. You have doubtless received good pay for it all." These ungener-

ous suspicions wore upon his spirit, and he would sometimes break out thus: "Oh that I were in some distant land, where no one had ever known me and I knew nobody, that I might be able to hold men's attention fast to the truth, without the possibility of their flying off to these horrid imaginings."

More than once he expressed a desire to have another personal interview with the patriarch, that he might tell him his whole heart, and see what impression it would make upon him. "The patriarch," he said, "is not naturally a man of a bad disposition, and perhaps, if he could be well assured that I am actuated neither by revenge nor by the love of money, but simply by a love of the truth, his feelings would be softened toward me, and something might be done through him for the benefit of religion." He desired, among other things, to propose to the patriarch that an edition of the New Testament should be printed, under his supervision, at the press of the convent of Shu-air, the expense of which, if he chose, should be borne by the English. Such an edition would, of course, be free from the objection urged against the

books brought by the missionaries, — that they were printed in England.

This suggestion he actually did make, at a subsequent day, to the patriarch, but, as might have been anticipated, his Blessedness would not entertain the proposal for a moment.

THE PATRIARCH.

CHAPTER IV.

Priest Nicolas comes for Assad — The latter accompanies him to the patriarch — Anxiety on his account — He is occupied in discussion — Is threatened with imprisonment — Escapes in the night to Beirût — Writes a statement of occurrences.

THE patriarch had had abundant time to get the information that Assad had returned to our employment, and we were every day in expectation of hearing that the threatened bull of excommunication had been issued by him. But, instead of this, on the sixth of January, 1826, he sent from Kesruan his own brother, Priest Nicolas, as a special messenger, with a communication containing his apostolic blessing, inviting Assad to an interview, and making him flattering promises. He throws out anew the common insinuation in his letter, that Assad had been bought with a price by the Protestants, and adds, "This money, with which the English print books and hire men into their service, is but the pelf of

the Man of Sin, and could you but be present to hear what the people say of you, through the whole country, for associating yourself with the English, you would never again be found in their company."

The consultation with the priest was a private one. When we learned what had been its object, we perceived that Assad was quite disposed to comply with the patriarchal invitation, and all expressed our serious fears that the priesthood were meditating evil against him. But he had little fear of it. He had known an instance of a vile infidel and blasphemer, who went about in the land, propagating his corrupt sentiments wherever he chose, and he suffered no other punishment than an excommunication. It was not the custom of the Maronites to take life or imprison men, as we had intimated, on account of religion.

We assured him that some men fear and hate the truth more than he was aware of, and that his church would not feel herself half so much in danger from an open blasphemer as from an active lover of the gospel. But he was so confident that good would result from the proposed

visit that we ceased to urge our objections, and commended him to the will of God.

He set off the same day, in company with the priest. Immediately on reaching the convent of the patriarch, he wrote and sent us the following lines: —

"I am now at the convent of Alma, and, God be thanked, I arrived in good health. As yet, however, I have not seen his Blessedness.

"I pray God, the Father, and his only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, that he will establish me in his love, and that I may never exchange it for any created thing; that neither death nor life, nor things present nor things to come, nor hight nor depth, nor riches nor honor, nor dignity nor office, nor any thing in creation, shall separate me from this love. I beg you to pray to God for me, which request I make also to all the believers, after giving them abundant salutations."

Weeks passed on, and we received no farther direct intelligence from him. Meantime, conflicting reports were in circulation, of a character to excite our strong apprehensions in regard to his comfort, if not to his safety. In

the latter part of February, therefore, we despatched a trusty messenger to find him, and, if possible, to obtain accurate knowledge of his situation. The man returned the next day, having found him at Deir Alma, and having providentially enjoyed the privilege of seeing him in private. The interview, however, was necessarily short, and was closed by Assad's giving the messenger the following hastily-written lines: —

"To the Much Respected, etc.: — Your note has reached me, and has added another proof to the many I have heretofore had of your kind regard for me. I now beseech you once more to pray for me, that I may be delivered from the dark devices of men. I find myself reduced to quite an extremity. One or more of three things are before me: either to be thought mad, or to commit sin, or to offer up my life. I call upon God for deliverance. I can not now write fully. The bearer will tell you all."

The messenger informed us that the Emeer of the district had threatened to send him to Bted-deen,* to be put in prison. Assad had

* The seat of government in the mountains.

replied that he was ready to go to prison and to death. He was engaged with the patriarch. bishop, and others, in daily controversy. His countenance wore a shade of melancholy, and his eyes were red, apparently with weeping.

When the messenger proposed the plan of interfering by consular authority for his rescue, he objected to it, thinking that such a course might exasperate his enemies and cost him his life. He thought it better to wait in patience, and leave it for Providence to open a way for his escape.

The assurance we had thus gained of his steadfastness in the faith was a cordial to all his Protestants friends. The veteran bishop Dyonysius wept as he heard the recital of his circumstances, and many others of our acquaintance waxed confident by the bonds of the prisoner. We could not but hope that the good confession which he was witnessing before the dignitaries both of church and state, might, by the blessing of God, open the eyes of some of them, and lead them to embrace the truth as it is in Jesus.

One week after this, a young man of the

mountains called upon us, and said, "Signor Felix* sends you his salutations." The youth had just now arrived from the neighborhood of Deir Alma, where he had lately seen our friend, and from whom he had the day before received a note addressed to himself, which he handed us to read. It was written in Assad's well-known hand, and merely expressed a wish that the young man would call at midnight, and they two would set off together for Beirût.

For some reason, the youth did not call at the convent as Assad had requested, and so his escape, for that night, was postponed. Hoping that he would be able to improve the succeeding night for his purpose, we held a little meeting for prayer, to implore for him the divine aid and protection in the accomplishment of his design. The night, however, passed, and we had not had the pleasure of being roused from sleep to let the fugitive in. An outer chamber, where he had been accustomed to study and to sleep, and which he might have entered without disturbing us, was examined in vain. We had gloomy apprehensions that his

* He spoke Italian. Felix is the Scripture name for Assad.

plan had been discovered before he could leave the convent, or that he had been, perhaps, arrested on his way, and taken back to a worse confinement than before. It was not long, however, before his well-known form was seen approaching. The news sped like lightning through the house, and many glad countenances and extended hands met him at the door.

Having taken a little rest and refreshment, which he much needed, he entertained us with a brief history of his escape. Being disappointed the *first* night, he was determined not to wait through another; and accordingly, at about twelve o'clock, when all were asleep, having written a paper and left it on his bed, with the Scripture quotation, "Come out of her, my people," etc., he retired softly out of doors, and commenced his dark and wearisome walk. The way for some distance was, like all the mountain paths, narrow, stony, and crooked. He often found himself astray from it, stumbling over rocks and hedges, wading in water, or miring in mud. In a couple of hours or more he came to a place, by the seaside, where he found a large boat thrown up on the shore,

under which he cast himself for a while, and rested. He then ventured out, and continued his walk, without molestation or interruption, till he reached his asylum at Beirût.

In the course of the morning, Sheikh Yoosef el Khoori, a sort of sheriff of the neighborhood, who had, doubtless by the patriarch himself, been informed of Assad's escape to us, sent a messenger to him to request him to come and see him. He declined going. The messenger came a second time, reporting the words of his master, "If you do not come I will be down upon you." The threat might mean, "I'll be the death of you." We sent, in return, a respectful note to the sheikh, to say that if he would give himself the trouble to call and take with us a neighborly cup of coffee, he could easily enjoy his desired interview with our guest.

Just as our note was sent off, our English consul, Mr. Abbott, providentially came in, and the sheikh, who arrived soon after, found a consular reprimand ready for him, for presuming to deal out threats against a man under English protection. The sheikh immediately began

to shake his robe, and protest that he had never sent such a message; that the man who brought it was but an ass, and had said it from his own brain; that for himself, having heard that Assad had come from the patriarch, he merely wished to see him, and know from his own personal observation whether the reports about his insanity were true or not. "Assad," said he, "is my bosom friend, — my own son. Whatever I have is his; and as for the church, patriarchs, and priests, I care nothing about them." It is needless to add, the sheikh had no more threats to send.

Toward evening, young Assemáni, the youth who brought us the salutation of *Felix* the day before, entered the house, weary and faint. He had gone back from Beirût to Deir Alma, on horseback, to see if he could in any way aid his friend, and was there at the moment when it was first discovered that he had fled. Just then the patriarch and his train were engaged in the religious exercises of the early morning, in the chapel. When the event of Assad's disappearance was announced, they were all in a state of excitement. Every man looked blank

upon his neighbor, and asked what was to be done?

One man there was among them who sympathized with Assad; who had conversed with him freely, and encouraged him to hold on his way, telling him the truth was with him. This man now spoke out in Assad's justification. "You had reason," said he, "to expect nothing else. Why should he stay with you here? What had he here to do? What had he to enjoy? Books he had none; friendly society none; conversation against religion abundant; insults upon his opinions and feelings abundant. Why should he not leave you?"

Others expressed their regrets at his escape; and some, especially the chief priests, were full of pity for the "poor maniac," and sent in quest of him in every direction; lest, peradventure, he might be found starving in some cavern, or floating in the sea, or dashed in pieces at the bottom of some precipice.

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CHAPTER V.

Assad's account of himself — Of his changes of religious sentiment — Priest Nicolas — Visit to Alma — Discussions — Visit to Ain Waraka — To Bzummár — Return to Ain Waraka and to Alma — Threats and flatteries — Escape to Beirût — Purposes for the future.

ON learning from Assad all that had happened to him during his late absence, we requested him to give us the substance of it in *writing*, that we might might make use of it to his and our advantage in future time, especially in case false reports about him should be circulated that might need to be contradicted. He complied with our request, and, though somewhat long, it is thought best to give it here entire, with the exception of those parts already made use of in the preceding pages. His own composition will show the cast of his mind better than another can describe it for him: —

"Beirût, March, 1826

"Respected Brethren and Friends, —

"Since many have heard a report that I have

become insane, and others that I have become a heretic, I have wished to write an account of myself in few words, and then let every reader judge for himself whether I am mad or am slandered, whether I am following after heresy or after the truth of the orthodox faith.

"Every serious man of understanding will confess that true religion is not that of compulsion, nor that which may be bought and sold, but that which proceeds from attending to the Word of God, believing it, and endeavoring to walk according to it, to the glory of God; and that they who are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, are far from true religion. This is the standard by which I would be judged by every one who may read this narrative."

[Here follow the circumstances of his connection with Mr. King, his discussions, Scripture examinations, etc., down to his temporary retirement from Beirût to Hád-et by the patriarch's order, and his subsequent return to Beirût. He then proceeds: —]

"After I had been at Beirût no long time,

the patriarch's brother, Priest Nicolas, arrived, and sent me a request to grant him an interview, which I hastened to do. Priest Nicolas then began to converse with me in a way of reproof, for being in connection with the English. I replied, that, as we ought not to deny the unity of God because Muslems believe it, so we ought not to hate the gospel because the English love it. He then began to tell me of the wish of his Holiness, the reverend patriarch, that I should come out to him, and of his great love to me; and said that the patriarch had heard that I had received thirty or forty purses of money from the English, and he assured me of their readiness not to suffer this to be any hindrance to my coming out from them.

"Now, if my object were money, as some have seemed to think, I had then a fair opportunity to tell him a falsehood, and say, 'I have indeed received from the English that sum, and can not leave them unless I restore the whole.' In this way I might have contrived to take what I wished. But I did not so answer him, but declared to him the truth how much wages

I had received, which was nothing extraordinary.

"He then gave me a paper from his Holiness, in which he says, 'You will have received from us an answer, requesting that when we come to Alma you will come up and see us. We expect your presence, and, if God please, we will provide you with some proper situation, with an income that shall be sufficient for your support. Delay not your coming, lest the present happy opportunity should pass by.'

"Knowing as I did that many people supposed that my object in continuing with the English was worldly gain, I did not delay in fulfilling the request of his Reverence, hoping to remove this suspicion, and to enjoy an opportunity of speaking the truth without the suspicion of being hired to do it.

"So, on the sixth of January, I left Beirût, with Priest Nicolas, and reached Deir Alma the same night. His Holiness was not there, but the next day, as he came, I met him, and saluted him in the road. In the evening, he called me to his chamber, and began to ask me questions, that he might discover what I was; and

I answered him, telling him the whole truth, although this course was against my personal convenience. At this he seemed surprised, for he must have perceived that it was contrary to what he had been accustomed to see in me. Afterwards, when I declared to him that I had never before been a believer, according to the true, living faith, he was probably more astonished still. He then asked me if I believed as the Romish Church believed. I again told him the truth, that I did not. He asked me then what was my faith, and I answered to the following purport: 'True and living faith must be divine, connected with hope, love, and repentance; and that all these virtues are the gift of God, etc. That I believed the truth as God had inspired it, and that it would be but a lie if I should say that I believed as the Romish Church does, while in fact I do not. I must have proofs.'

"After some further conversation of this sort, he told me that this doctrine of mine was heretical, and that as long as I remained in this state of opinion he would suffer no one to have intercourse with me in buying or selling, etc.

This prohibition of his brought to mind the words in Revelation xiii. 16, 17.* Then he gave me to understand that if, after three days, I did not return from this state, I must no more enter the church.

"At other times he pressed me to swear by the eucharist and by the gospel that my faith was like the faith of the Roman Catholic Church. He asked me if I was a Bible-man. I replied, 'I do not take the opinions of the Bible-men as my guide; but if you think me a Bible-man on account of the opinions I have advanced, so be it.'

"The sum of what I said was, that, without evidence, I could not believe what the Romish Church believes. From that time, after three days, I did not enter the church for a space.

"Some time passed again, and the patriarch inquired of me my faith. I then explained to him what I believed respecting the unity and trinity of God, and that the Messiah was one person with two natures, and that the Holy Spirit proceeds from the Father and the Son.

* "He causeth all to receive a mark," etc., and that no man might *buy or sell* save he that had the mark or the name of the beast.

Then arose a disputation about who is the Vicar whom Christ has appointed to explain his law. I answered in substance, as I afterward did in writing, that by reason and learning and prayer to God, with purity of motive, we may know *from the Holy Scriptures* every thing necessary to our salvation. This was the purport of my reply, which, perhaps, was not expressed with sufficient clearness, or perhaps I was not able to say it in the *manner* that was appropriate, for such a tumult and storm was excited in the company, that they seemed to me to be intent on overcoming me by dint of vociferation rather than by argument, and on drowning my voice rather than understanding my opinions.

When, after some days, came Bishop Abdallah Blabil and Padre Bernardus, of Gazeer, the patriarch one day called me to them in his chamber, and asked me what I wished; whether money or office, or whatever it might be; promising to gratify me, at the same time speaking of his love for me, and of his deep interest in my welfare. These professions I knew to be sincere, but they were according to the world, and not according to the gospel. I assured him that

I wanted none of the things that he had mentioned; that I was submissive and obedient to him, and that if he thought of me that I had taken money of the English, he was welcome to shut me up in my chamber, as in a prison, and take from me every thing I possessed; that I wished from my superiors nothing but my necessary food and clothing, and that I was ready to give them a written assurance to this effect. The bishop and priest then begged me, in presence of the patriarch, to say that my faith was like that of the Romish Church. I replied that I feared to tell a falsehood by saying I believed a thing, while actually, in my reason, I did not believe it. 'But,' said they, 'the patriarch here will absolve you from the sin of the falsehood.' I then turned to the patriarch, and put the question whether he would so absolve me. HE ANSWERED THAT HE WOULD.* I said, 'What the law of nature itself condemns, it is out of the power of any man to make lawful.' He then

* This Padre Bernardus was subsequently at Beirût, and begged the privilege of reading this statement of Assad's before it had been published. He acknowledged the facts here recorded, to the shame of both himself and the patriarch, nor did he call in question the truth of a single particular stated by Assad in the whole narrative.

again asked me what I wished to do. I said I wished to go and see the Armenian patriarch, Gregory, and inquire of him what I ought to do. He gave his consent, and requested me, when I had done this, to return to him; to which I also agreed.

"I was accompanied by a priest from the part of the patriarch to the college of Ain Waraka, where I found Priest Yoosef, of Shaheen, with whom I conversed a considerable time, and with great pleasure, for I found that, for himself, he did not believe that the pope was infallible in matters of faith; that is to say, unless in concert with the congregated church (assembled in council). I then began to confess to him. But soon I saw that he held steadfastly some opinions for no other reason than that the church so believed, and this without bringing any proper evidence of the fact, viz., from councils or from the fathers; and burst out upon me with exceeding bitter words, saying, 'Know that the church neither deceives nor is deceived, and be quiet'; and when I wished him to instruct me according to the Word of God, with the simple object of glori-

fying God and fulfilling his will, I saw that he was not disposed to support any opinion for the reason that it was according to the Word of God, but because *so thought the church.* And I saw him also ready to maintain these opinions, although I should adduce the strongest evidence against them from the Holy Scriptures. He told me it was impossible for him to teach any thing contrary to the Council of Trent. So I found I could not receive his system, because, though you should show him that it was wrong, he would not give it up, lest with it he should be obliged to give up his office. I therefore told him, 'You are bound, shut up as between walls, by the doctrines of the pope and the Council of Trent.'

"In conversation on the images, he would have proved the propriety of their use from 'Baronius's Church History.' We found this author quoting the sacred Scriptures, to prove that our Saviour sent a picture of himself to the king of Abgar. I declared that it was false in so far as he stated that the gospel gave any such testimony, and on that account I discredited the whole story. To this he gave me no

answer. Afterwards, as we were reading the same history of Baronius, and found a statement respecting the bishops collected in Constantinople to the number of three hundred and thirteen, that they decreed the abolition of the use of images, and that, in the clearest terms, because it was idolatrous, I asked him the question, 'If an assembly composed of the bishops of the church is infallible, how is it that this council is said to have committed an error?'

"About this time I heard that a certain Armenian priest, who was accustomed to come on Sabbath days to Ain Waraka to learn Arabic grammar, wished to converse with me about religion. I was much rejoiced to hear it, and was impatient for an interview. When he came, we had a short talk together about works unlawful on the Sabbath day,* and on some other subjects, but he excused himself from further conversation at that time, for want of leisure. He, however, assured me that when we should next meet he hoped to have a sufficient

* Assad no doubt called his attention to the impropriety of his studying grammar on the Sabbath day, which probably suggested this topic.

opportunity to dwell on these subjects at large. I continued at Ain Waraka the whole week, reading with the rest at prayers, and confessing to Priest Yoosef, above mentioned. On the next Lord's day, the Armenian priest aforesaid came again, and I fully expected to have time and opportunity to ascertain his opinions. But I was again disappointed, for he wished to have the discussion carried on in writing, and to have an assistant with him, besides other conditions. So I failed of my object, but was, on the whole, more inclined than before to receive the doctrines of the Romish Church, since the priest had promised to bring his evidence on all points from the Word of God, saying that they (the papists) were walking in light and not in darkness.

"At this time word was brought me that his Holiness, Bishop Jacob, superior of the convent of Bzummár, wished to see me. And because Priest Yoosef Shaheen at first told me that this state into which I had fallen was a temptation of Satan, and at one time showed me that it was usual for persons, when they came to manhood, to be tempted on the subject of their

religion, and, at another, assured me that it was a state of delirium, and because I had heard formerly that this Bishop Jacob had himself been delirious, and that he was a man of good information,—for all these reasons I wished very much to see him. On the same day I went to Priest Yoosef, and declared to him plainly my opinions, showing him that the beast in Revelation was a figure, as the Lamb evidently was, and how dreadful the torments of those must be who worship the image of the beast. I then disclosed to him my intention of going up to the convent of Bzummár, where were the Patriarch Gregory, Bishop Jacob, and the Armenian priest before spoken of.

"I set off the same day, and on my arrival saluted the patriarch, and the same night we reasoned together on the subjects of faith, hope, and charity. I discovered that the patriarch's opinion was, that a man may be possessed of living faith, a faith unto salvation, although he should have no corresponding emotion in his heart. I answered him with a quotation from Saint Paul, 'With the heart man believeth unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is

made unto salvation.' But this did not convince him. He explained the *heart* to mean the *will*. It then appeared to me that he was not a true believer; and from that time forward I could not confide in him as I would confide in a real Christian, but I was willing to hear his worldly arguments.

"On the following day I asked him how it could be said that the pope was infallible, if there were no proofs to be brought to show it. I asked him if this pretension of the pope was that of an apostle or a prophet. If either of these, he could not be believed without miracles, and that we Christians were not to believe any one of such pretensions, though he were even to bring down fire out of heaven.* His replies to me were weak; and after a good deal of conversation on what is the real church of Christ, on pardonable ignorance, etc., he began to prove that if the pope is not infallible then there is *no religion*, and even NO GOD. But I observed all his proofs to be so weak that I could not be convinced, and I fell into deep perplexity as to what I should do; for some-

* Revelation xiii. 13.

times I greatly endeavored to submit my judgment to his rules and opinions, and I made these efforts until my very head would ache. The next day I asked him what was that '*great city*' ruling over the kings of the earth, mentioned in the Revelation. He brought out his book of commentaries, and answered that it was Rome, which is also called spiritual Babylon, or Babel. From this time I was with the Bishop Jacob every day for three or four hours, and his best advice to me was, to pray to Saint Anthony, of Padua, together with one repetition of the Lord's Prayer, and one of Hail Mary, etc., every day for three days.

"When I was thus in doubt on account of the weakness of their reasons, one of the monks said to me, 'The patriarch knows well what is *good tobacco*' [intimating that he knew little else]. I hoped that this priest would explain to me those doctrines of the Romish Church which I could not believe, so I went into his chamber, and questioned him very particularly on all points. He expressed his wish that we might discuss together all the points, one by one, but on condition that the Patriarch Joseph

(Maronite patriarch) should appoint him to do so. He told me he had in his possession a book refuting the opinions of Luther and Calvin. I begged permission to read it, but he refused, telling me, however, that the doctrines of the church all remained unrefuted. He wished me to go down to the Patriarch Joseph on this business. So, after a stay of four days from my arrival, I departed for Ain Waraka, according to my promise to Priest Joseph Shasheen.

"Here I found one of my friends, of whom I had heard that he had been very much astonished at my connection with the Bible-men. When we met, and had conversed a little on some points, he would no longer hear me, fearing, among other things, lest he should be crazed. When we touched on the subject of the 'great city,' above mentioned, he told me that he had seen a book of commentaries on the Revelation, which showed the city clearly to be Rome. At this I wondered greatly, since the meaning was so clear that not even the doctors of the Romish Church herself could deny it.

"I then finished my confession to Priest Joseph, and, about sunset the same day, went down to the patriarch, to the convent of Alma. His Blessedness once more urged me to declare in writing that my faith was according to the faith of the Romish Church. From this I excused myself, begging that such a thing might not be required of me, for the Council of Trent had added nothing to the creed which was established by that of Nice, which begins, 'I believe in one God,' etc. A short space after this I offered him my thoughts, with modest arguments, and mild suggestions on his duty to cause the gospel to be preached in the churches among the Maronite people, intimating that this might be done by the priests in the vulgar language, every Sabbath day, for one or two hours; and if this should seem too much of a burden to the people, let them be relieved of some of the feast-days.

"After this, I remained silent in my chamber near to his own; and as there came to me a few of the deacons of the patriarch and others, I read to them, at their request, in the New Testament printed in Rome. But in a little

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time after I entered my room, and found in it none of all the books that had been there; neither New Testament nor any other; and I knew that the patriarch had given the order for their removal, for he reproved me for reading the gospel to those persons, but he could accuse me of no false or erroneous explanations, or that I taught them any thing heretical.

"One day after this he called me to his presence, and began to threaten me in a most unusual manner. I said, 'What do you wish of me, your Reverence? What have I done, and what would you have me do? What is my sin, except that I conversed with some individuals, showing them the errors of the Church of Rome?' Then again he requested me to say that I believed as did that church, and said, grasping his own beard firmly in his hand, 'See how I will take you if you do not repent.' I begged him to appoint some one to show me the truth, by way of discussion, but he would not, and continued expressing his own sentiment, that we are bound to hold fast to the church, even to such a length that even *if she should reject the gospel we should reject it too.*

"And here I wish to say a word to every reader that regards and loves the truth. How does such doctrine appear to you? And how could I believe in all which the Romish Church holds, without *knowing* all of it? And how could I say, without a lie, that I believe, when I do not believe?

"In saying the above, the patriarch broke out in an exceeding loud and threatening voice; and when I saw it I was afraid that I should be found among the *fearful* (Rev. xxi. 8), and rose to depart; but on reaching the door, I turned and said to him, 'I will hold fast the religion of Jesus Christ, and I am ready, for the sake of it, to shed my blood; and though you should all become infidels, yet will not I;' and so left the room.

"One of my friends told me that he had suggested to the patriarch the grand reason why I did not believe in the pope, which was, that, among other doctrines of his, he taught that he could not commit an error; and that now, though a pope should see that any one of his predecessors had erred, he could not say this, for fear that he also should appear to be an

unbeliever. This friend also told me that the patriarch wondered how I should pretend that I held to the Christian religion and still converse in such abusive terms against it. And *I* also wondered, after he saw this, that he should not be willing so much as to ask me, in mildness and self-possession and forbearance, *for what reasons* I was unwilling to receive the doctrines of the pope, or to *say* I believed as he did. But, so far from this, he would not suffer the above-mentioned Armenian priest to hold a discussion with me, and, still more, laid every person, and even his own brother, under excommunication if they should presume to dispute or converse with me on the subject of religion. Under an entire bereavement of books, and shut out from all persons that might instruct me, from what quarter could I get the evidence necessary to persuade me to accept the patriarch's opinions?

"Another cause I had of wonder, which was, that not one of all with whom I conversed, after he saw me to be heretical and declining from the truth, thought proper to advise me to use the only means of becoming strong in the faith,

viz., prayer to God Most High, and searching his holy Word, which a child may understand. I wondered, too, that they should ridicule and report me abroad as one mad; and after all this, be so fearful to engage in a dispute with the madman, lest he should vanquish them in argument, or spoil their understandings, or turn them away from the truth.

"After some time, there came to our convent the Bishop of Beirût. I gave him the usual salutation, and was greatly rejoiced to see him, as I knew the excellency of his understanding and his quickness of apprehension, and I hoped that, after some discussion between us, he would explain that truth, and that he would rest on clear evidences to support his views. But once more I was disappointed; for one day when I asked him a question, and during the whole short conversation which followed, whenever I began to bring evidence against him he was angry, and finally drove me from my chamber in a fury, and that for no other cause, as he pretended, than that he did not wish to converse with a heretic.

"By and by Priest Joseph Shaheen came

down to us from Ain Waraka, and I endeavored to get him to unite with me in persuading the patriarch to send out among the people some evangelists to preach the gospel, or that there should be preaching in the churches by the local priests. But he would not cöoperate with me in this, and so I again failed of my purpose.

"Then when the patriarch and the Bishop of Beirût wished to dispute with me, I expressed the hope that the discussion might be in meekness, and without anger. It was concluded that the discussion should be in writing, that no one should afterwards be able to alter what he had once said. They then commenced by asking me questions. The first question was, in substance, this: 'Has the Messiah given us a new law?' At first I did not grant that he had, strictly speaking, given us a new law, and quoted the words of John, 'The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ.' But when I afterwards saw that by a *new law* they meant merely the gospel, or the New Testament, I answered in the affirmative. They then asked me if there were not to be found, in this new law, some obscurities. I

answered, 'Yes.' They said, 'Suppose any difference of sentiment should arise between the teachers of Christianity, how are we to distinguish the truth from error?' I answered thus: 'We have no other means of arriving at the truth than searching the Word of God with learning and reason, and inquiring of spiritual teachers with purity of motive and with disinterestedness of inclination. If the obscurities of the Word of God can not be understood by these means, our ignorance is excusable, and will not prevent our salvation. If the passages which still remain obscure concern *faith*, it is sufficient for a man to say, 'I believe according as the truth is in itself before God,' or, 'I believe in the thing as God inspired it to the writer.' If, on the other hand, the obscurity respects our *practice*, after making use of the means above mentioned, if that branch of our practice be forbidden or under a doubt, desist from it; but if it is not forbidden, do it; and *Blessed is he that condemneth not himself in that thing which he alloweth.*'

"When I had given them this answer, they brought no evidence to prove any error in it;

and, moreover, afterward never put to me any question in writing.

"One evening, as I was walking with the Bishop of Beirût, he began to tell me how much they all felt for me, and how unwilling they should be to put me in chains until I should rot, and that, were it not for their sympathy and their love toward me, there were men who had conversed with them, who were ready to take my life. Some further conversation passed, and I began to introduce the subject of religion, and to ask how we could believe in the pope, that he was infallible. He quoted, for proof, the words of our Saviour, 'Thou art Peter,' etc. I asked him if it was proper to suppose that all things bestowed on Peter were also given to the pope, — if so, why does not the pope speak with tongues, and why is he not secure from the evil effects of poison? He answered that these last things were not necessary. 'But how do you prove it necessary,' said I, 'that the pope should not err? Is it not sufficient, if any one has doubts, to ask his teacher, who is not infallible? If you say *yes*, then the opinion of the fallible man will answer; but if you say *no*, and that

we *must* go to the pope, what must become of the man who dies before the reply of the pope can reach him?'

"He then resorted to another mode of proof, saying, 'Is it not desirable that the pope should be infallible?' I assured him I wished he might be so. 'Well, is not God able to make him so?' 'Yes, he is able to do all things.' He wished to infer his point from these two premises, but I said, 'Your reasoning with regard to the *pope* may be applied to all the *bishops* of the church, for it is desirable that they should all be infallible, and God is able to make them so.' He said, '*No;* for the bishops, feeling less their need of the pope, would not look to him nor submit to him as their head, and thus there would be divisions and contentions in the church.' 'But why,' said I, 'did not divisions and contentions arise among the apostles; were they not all infallible, as well as Peter?' He would not admit that they were infallible. I told him it was a thing not to be believed that the pope was infallible, and the apostles not; for it was well known that the Holy Ghost descended upon the apostles in a

peculiar manner. I asked him again how it could be made to appear that divisions would be produced if all bishops were infallible, since if they were all of one opinion, as they of course would be, their union must be the more perfect. We conversed farther at some length, when he concluded by saying, 'You are possessed of a devil.'

"The next day, as the patriarch and the bishop of Beirût were seated under a tree, without the convent, I went out to them, and said to the patriarch, 'Your Holiness sent for me to come hither for employment, and I came, and have remained here a considerable time; what do you wish me to do for you, for I can not remain here in idleness?' He said, 'What do you wish to do?' 'If your Holiness wishes that I should teach at Ain Waraka, I will do that.' 'No, I can not have you going to Ain Waraka, to corrupt the minds of those who are studying science, and to contradict my opinions.' 'But I will instruct in grammar.' 'No; the youth of the college are now attending to *moral* science.' 'Well, I only beg you will let me know what I am to do; and if you have no employment for me, I wish to return home.'

"The bishop here broke in upon the conversation, saying, 'I will not suffer you to go back among my flock, to deceive them, and turn them away to heresy.' 'Will you, then,' said I, 'debar me from my home? If so, let me know where I shall go, and what I shall do.' He then turned to the patriarch, and said, 'Indeed, I will not suffer this man to go abroad among my people, for he is even attempting to make heretics of us also.' 'Yes,' replied the patriarch, 'it will not do, after this, to afford him a residence in any part of the land.' The bishop now turned back to me, and, in the bitterest anger and rage, reviled me, and said, 'If you go among my people again I will send and take your life, though it should be in the bosom of your own house.' I said, 'Well, what would you have me do, and what will you do with me? If you wish to take my life or shut me up in prison or give me up to the government, whatever it may be, I wish to know it.' 'You must wait here,' said the patriarch, 'till spring or summer, and then we shall see how you are.' I answered him, in the words of that Christian who was given by his judge ten days to delib-

erate whether he would worship an image, 'Consider the time already past, and do what you please.'

"I asked the bishop his reason for wishing to kill me; what evil I had done. He was filled with high and bitter wrath, saying, 'What! miscreant, shall we let you go at large, to corrupt my flock for me? What has passed, is it not enough?' I rose, and said to them, 'God, at least, is with me,' and left them. The patriarch sent his nephew after me, requesting me, in soothing words, to return, and saying that he would do what I wished.

"But when I contemplated the hardness of heart manifested by the bishop, I could not restrain myself from reproving him, hoping that he would be softened down. I said, therefore, 'Our Lord Jesus Christ said, "*Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh*," and that Satan, who was in his heart, wished to kill me; for Satan was a murderer from the beginning. I told him, moreover, that he was not a true disciple of Christ. And when I had left them a second time, the patriarch again sent his nephew to inquire what I wished; whether

it was money or what else, promising that he would grant my demands. I returned, and told him I had a request to make of *one thing only*, and I hoped he would answer me not as to a little child, asking a childish thing. He asked me what it was. I said, 'I would ask of you the favor to send from your priests two faithful men to preach the gospel through the country; and I am ready, if necessary, to sell all I possess to give it them as part of their wages.' He promised me it should be done. But I had reason to expect that he would receive such a request as from the mouth of one out of his reason.

"Now there was at the convent a man called Priest Gabriel, who was said to be insane, and was known to all his acquaintance as a man that would never say a word on the subject of religion (! !), and he was a scribe of the patriarch. This man, from the time of my arrival up to that day, had never asked me a single question about my faith or opinions, nor had given me the least word of advice about any of my errors. The same night, as this priest was passing the evening in company with

the patriarch, bishops, and other individuals, as if they might have been conversing about my idiot-like request of that day, the patriarch sent me a request to come in and sit with them. I complied. The patriarch then asked Priest Gabriel and the others present if two proper men could be found to go forth and preach the gospel. They then answered, one to another, such a one and such a one would be the fittest persons, some naming one person and some another, looking at me in the mean time, laughingly, to see what I would say.

"I smiled in a pleasant manner at all this, and when one asked me why I laughed, I said to the patriarch, 'Have you not perfect confidence in the integrity of Priest Gabriel?' He said 'Yes.' I then said, 'Pray, let this priest then examine me for the space of a few days, and if he does not conclude that I am a heretic I will, for *one*, take upon myself this duty of preaching the gospel.' This remark put an immediate end to the conversation.

"The next day, when the bishop wished to mock me before the patriarch and a sheikh of the country, I answered his questions according

to his own manner. But in a little time he began to revile me, and to reproach me with having blasphemed against the eucharist and against the Virgin Mary and the pictures, and this because (as he pretended) I had said before one of his deacons, that were it not for fear of the patriarch I would tear all the pictures in pieces, and burn them. I gave him answer to every particular by itself, and when he found he could substantiate against me no accusation, he increased in wrath. I then said, 'If this is your pleasure, I will say no more.' I told him that I had said that the pictures were not gods; that such was my opinion always; and that I wished to tell all the common people so, that they might understand it. To this, however, he would not consent. He then began to accuse me of saying of the eucharist, 'Let them smell the scent of it, and know that it is but bread and wine still.' I told him if he would give me leave to speak, or if he wished to hear my views, I would speak; 'But,' said I, 'how is it that you bring accusations against me, and do not suffer me to make my defense?' Here again he expressed his unwillingness that I

should speak, but the patriarch said to me, 'Speak.' I then observed that Saint Ephraim says, 'Come, eat the fire of the bread, and drink the spirit of the wine,' and I began to say from this, that our eating the body of Christ was not a *natural* eating, but a *spiritual* one. Then he again fell into a rage against me. I said to him, *Be ye angry and sin not.* I told you before that I would keep silence, and not speak without consent; and whatever you wish, tell me, that I may act or refrain accordingly.'

"At this, the patriarch smiled; but the bishop was roused into passion still more violent even, against the patriarch as well as myself, and rose from his seat and went away. I also left the room.

"In the evening, when there were collected together the patriarch and bishop and all the monks, with Priest Nicolas, whom they were about to ordain bishop on the morrow, the patriarch began again to ask me questions respecting my faith. I saw that his object, and that of those with him, was neither to benefit me nor to receive benefit, and so I gave them an-

swers according to their own trifling mood; saying, 'My faith is the faith of Peter, and Peter's faith is my faith. I believe all that God has given by inspiration to the one only holy Catholic Church.' The patriarch asked me, 'What is the church?' I answered, 'The church is the whole company of believers in the Messiah and his law, on all the face of the earth.' 'But where is the place of the church?' 'The place of the church is the whole world; it being made up of every nation and people.' 'What,' said he, 'of the English among the rest?' 'Yes,' I said, 'of the English also.' Afterwards, when he continued to question me, and I saw that he had no other object than ridicule, I declared, 'This is my faith, and to this faith will I hold, whether it is worth any thing or not.' I then asked him if he was willing to hold a discussion on the subject, but he would not consent to it in any shape.

"He after this repeated his desire again that, without fear or reserve, I would tell him my faith. I referred him and those present to Priest Nicolas, about to be ordained the next day, saying that I had conversed with him on

all points particularly, and that he was able to make answer for me. The priest then bore testimony on the spot, that I had said before him that *I believed the pope to be infallible;* whereas I never said this to him at any time. Subsequently, when I was in his company privately, I inquired how he could have borne such testimony of me as he had done. He confessed, in the fullest terms, that he knew it was a falsehood, but that he said what he did that they might cease to annoy me.

"The same night I had resolved on quitting them. So, at about midnight, I left the convent, committing myself to the protection of God, who never deserts them that trust in him, and arrived at Beirût on the morning of Thursday, March 2d, 1826.

"Here, then, I remain at present; not that I may take my views from the English, or from Bible-men, nor that I may receive my *religion* from them. No; not by any means; for my hold is on the Word of God. This is beyond all danger of error. In this I believe. In this is my faith, and according to it I desire to regulate my life and enjoy all my consolations.

By this I would show what I believe, without conferring with flesh and blood, that I may not run now nor run hereafter in vain.

"The object I have had in view in all that I have written or done or attempted to do, in these late occurrences, is that I may act as a disciple and servant of Christ. I could not, therefore, receive any advice which should direct me to hide my religion under a bushel. I can not regulate myself by any rules contrary to those of Christ, for I believe that all who follow his Word in truth are the good grain, and that all those who add to his Word are the tares sown by the enemy, which shall soon be gathered in bundles, and cast into the unquenchable fire.

"And I now beg every member of my sect, that is, of the Maronite Church, who loves the truth, if he sees me in an error to point it out to me, that I may leave it, and hold to the truth. But I must request those who would rectify my views not to do as did a priest of Beirût, who, after a considerable discussion, denied the inspiration of the New Testament. Men like him I do not wish to attempt to point

out my errors; for such men, it is evident, need rather to be preached to than to preach, and to be guided rather than to guide. But if any judicious man will take the word of God, and prove to me from it any doctrine whatever, I will respect him and honor him with all my heart. But if a doctrine can not be established thus, it is not only opposed to the doctrines of Christ, but to the views of the early Christians, the fathers of the church, such as St. Ephraim and others. Such doctrines I can not confess to be correct, although it should cost me the shedding of my blood.

"Be it known that I am not seeking money nor office, nor do I fear any thing from contempt nor from the cross nor from the persecution of men, nor from their insults nor their evil accusations, so far as they are false; for I am ready, for the sake of Christ, to die daily, to be accounted as a sheep for the slaughter; 'for in that he suffered being tempted, he is able to succor them that are tempted.' I consider 'that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory that shall be revealed in us.' I believe that

Jesus is our High Priest for ever, and hath an unchangeable priesthood, wherefore he is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him; for he is the one Mediator between God and men, and he ever liveth to make intercession with the Father for us, and he is the propitiation for our sins, and to him be glory with the Father and his Holy Spirit of life, for ever and ever. Amen.

"I wish to repeat, that if there is any one, whoever he may be, that will show me to be under a mistake, and that there is no salvation for me unless I submit to the pope, or, at least, show me that it is *lawful* for me to do so, I am ready to give up all my peculiar views, and submit in the Lord. But without evidence that my views are thus erroneous, I can not give them up, and yield a blind obedience, until it shall be not only *told* that I am mad, but until I shall be so in *fact*, and all my understanding shall leave me; not until men shall have burned, not only the Bibles printed by the English, but all the Bibles in the world. These two things, however (understanding and the Bible), I pray God to preserve both to me and to

all the followers of Christ, and may he preserve and save all you my friends in the Lord." *

* This bold statement of facts was forthwith copied and sent in manuscript in various directions through the mountains; and though it went directly back into the conclave at Deir Alma, it never, so far as known, met with the slightest contradiction as to its facts.

As soon as it could be sent to Malta and printed, it was, in this form, put into much wider circulation. It was read with avidity by the natives, who were thereby enabled to form something of a judgment about the merits of the question at issue between the persecutors and the persecuted, and the comparative spirit by which they were actuated. It made many Maronites ashamed of their patriarch, if not ashamed also of his doctrines.

CHAPTER VI.

Measures to recapture the fugitive; first by a sheriff, next by family relatives, and lastly by an insidious patriarchal pledge, Assad is entrapped.

THERE is reason to believe that the patriarch, vexed at the loss of his prisoner, had sent an express to Sheikh Yoosef, the sheriff before mentioned, to engage him, by any means in his power, to arrest and remand the fugitive; and that on hearing of this failure, he had next turned himself to the family relatives at Had-et and Ashkoot. The sheikh made his attempt on Thursday, and by the following day his Blessedness must have received the report of the failure of his mission. Saturday and the Sabbath were occupied in concocting the next experiment, and on Monday it was attempted to be carried through.

The morning had not far advanced, when a whole avalanche of messengers, full of zeal, came to carry out the views of their patriarchal

master. An uncle, from Ashkoot, and the two elder brothers, from Had-et, were closeted with Assad for a considerable time. Their talk was overheard, being exceedingly rapid and loud. Mansoor, the eldest of the two brothers, we had never before seen, and, from being a stranger, he took greater liberties than his brother, whom we had known. He showed himself a furious bigot, and brimful of the pure orthodox Roman Catholic apostolic spirit of persecution. Tannoos, the other brother, had been in our service, and might easily have been a good outward Protestant himself, only he thought it quite foolhardy to attempt to struggle against the powers that be.

The two brothers and the uncle, the last worse than the first, joined their force, and endeavored to overwhelm their single-handed antagonist by dint of noise and numbers. Their rebukes and threats and sneers, especially those of the uncle, were almost terrific. To use a phrase of Tannoos's, on a subsequent occasion, *their hearts were "iron against him."* They interrupted, contradicted, scoffed at him, called him possessed of the devil, and so on.

Assad was not intimidated nor vanquished; but he finally told them he would leave the English, and go home, as they wished, on one condition, viz., that they would bring him, from the patriarch, a written assurance, on the faith of a Christian, that he would not molest him. "But then," said they, "you must hold your tongue, and not be proclaiming your new notions among the people." "What!" said Assad, "must I go and live among you like a dumb man? I can not do it. My religion binds me not to do it. I must love my neighbor as myself." "Why, then," said they, "do you not go and preach the gospel to the Druzes and the Muslems? You answer, 'Because there is danger.' So there is danger in the present case. This is not a land of liberty, therefore you must be cautious and quiet." But Assad still insisted on his proposed condition. "My religion," said he, "is my all, and I must be free in it." They insisted that such a thing was impossible; that no one would dare go to the patriarch and offer such a proposal. "Then there is no more to be said," replied Assad, rising and walking the room, with clasped hands.

"Religion unshackled, religion unshackled, is my motto."

At this, they all rose, and, without any compliments, took their departure. But Mansoor reopened the door from without, and requested one word more with his brother, in private. Assad stepped out for a moment, and then returning, said, "Do you know what Mansoor has just told me? He says, 'Even if the authorities do not send and put an end to you, we ourselves will do the thing. So make up your mind accordingly.'"

The room was now perfect stillness. It was like the sudden calm after a thunder shower. Assad took a few turns across the room, in earnest thought, and then withdrew to the loft at one end of the chamber, where he was accustomed to sleep, and fell on his couch, evidently in prayer.

Suddenly another rapping is heard at the door. Who is it now that comes to break in upon this precious moment of quiet? The door is opened, and there stands another of the Shidiak brothers. It is Galeb. Assad's name is called, but there is no response. The brother

is taken to another room, where he is respectfully waited on, with pipe and coffee, according to custom, but with very little conversation on either side. After a short interval, Assad comes in with a solemn countenance, indicative of deep emotion.

The meeting was a sad one. Assad had had trial enough for one day. His eyes were downcast, and he seemed like one who had no spirit left in him. And the brother, like the friends who came to comfort Job, sat down with him, and spake not a word unto him, for he "saw that his grief was exceeding great." Nothing resulted from the interview, and if Galeb had any other object than merely to get a sight of his brother, he evidently had not the heart to make it known.

But the next day Galeb reappeared, and conversed at considerable length. He strongly urged his brother to leave the English and go home, for that his stay with us was bringing an insufferable shame upon the family; while Assad, on the other hand, insisted that this shame was no good reason for his leaving us, since our Lord himself had assured us that all

his true disciples would suffer reproach for his name's sake. When Galeb declared that there was no danger in his going to Had-et, he was asked whether he was not aware that Mansoor had, the day before, threatened to take his life. He colored, and turned away, muttering something which we could not understand, but not denying the fact.

Assad said, "I can not confide in you." "But," replied Galeb, "if we were really disposed to take your life, could we not do it as well here as at home?" We told him, "No; that the Emeer Besheer himself could not enter an Englishman's house without his permission, and that if the relatives of Assad continued to utter threats of this sort in our house we should feel obliged to shut them out of it."

When Galeb found that his brother was as determined as ever not to leave his asylum, though expressing his determination with all mildness of manner, he rose abruptly, and was going straight out without looking to the right hand or to the left, when Assad started and stepped after him, saying, "Well, let us know what you conclude upon. Do you mean to

leave me here in peace, or do you really mean to send some one to assassinate me in my room? I wish to know your intentions." Galeb continued moving on, without turning to show his face, and slowly shut the door after him.

Assad did not follow him out, but came back, expressing his regret that his brother had gone away in so ill a humor. "I can not please these people," said he. "However I address them they are sure to be angry. Soft words or hard words, it makes no difference. They come to me as if I were under their royal authority, and lay hold of my robe, and say, 'Give me this.' If I reply decidedly, 'I will not give it,' they are angry. If, on the other hand, I reason with them, ask them if they can not excuse me, tell them my own great need of it, that I can not conveniently do without it, they are equally angry."

Whether Galeb was ashamed or not of his rude and sullen departure at this time, we knew not; but it seemed as if he meant to make a half-way apology by sending a messenger early the next morning, with the following rather respectful note: —

"To our brother Assad esh Shidiak: — May God bless you. We beg you to come home this night, and not wait till the Sabbath. We have pledged ourselves to our mother that you shall come. If you fail to do so you will give trouble to us all. Your brother Galeb."

To which note Assad sat immediately down and wrote the following reply: —

"To our much loved and very dear brother Galeb: — May God preserve him. Your note has reached us, in which you speak of our coming home to-night, and say that if we do not come we shall trouble you all.

"Now if we were in some distant land, your longing after us in this manner might be very proper. But we are near you, and you have been here and seen us in all health, and we have seen you. Then quiet our mother with the assurance that we, through the bounty of God, are in perfect health, and that we have great peace through our Lord Jesus Christ; peace above all that the world can afford, and abundant joy in the Holy Ghost exceeding every earthly joy. But as to our coming up this evening, we do not find it convenient, not

even though we had the strongest desire to see our mother and you.

"I beg you all to love God, and to serve him in our Lord Jesus Christ. This is of all things the most important; for if we love God, if he but renew our hearts by the Holy Ghost, we shall enjoy each other's society for ever and ever.

"And now we are prevented from coming to you, and you know we are not void of all desire to see you, but the considerations to which we have alluded are, as we think, a sufficient apology. We beg you to accept our excuse, and to apologize for us to our mother, and we pray God to pour out his grace richly on you all, and give you length of days.

"Your brother,

"ASSAD."

Long before this letter could have reached Had-et, the mother herself, in company with her youngest son, Phares, was announced at the door. They had probably been the bearers of Galeb's note from Had-et, and, sending it in by another hand, had waited in the vicinity to receive and read the reply. If the reply had

been favorable to their wishes they would not have shown their faces in the Englishmen's house; but finding that Assad was yet unmoved, the mother, no doubt according to the plan of the patriarch and of the family, resolved to try, as a last resort, what effect maternal influence could produce.

We welcomed the new comers with all the respect and attention we could show them, but nothing we could say or do was able to damp the resolution of the mother to get her son away, if in her power. She besought him by the honor due to a mother, by the love he professed for her, by his regard for religion, for the reputation of the family, and for his own good name and personal safety, that he would immediately accompany her home; and when she found his resolution still unshaken, she declared she would never stir out of the house till he should go with her.

To all this Assad replied, "Of what use would it be if I should go with you? You wish me to go, you say, that I may show to the people that I am not mad. But you, who come hither and see and converse with me, still say

that I *am* mad. How can you expect that I shall convince others that I am *not* mad, when my own mother, who is with me, believes that I *am* so? Or do you imagine that when I get out among you, the air of Had-et will change my opinions or induce me to be silent? These are vain expectations. I see no object to be gained. If I should go forth among you, and tell the people what I believe, viz., that you are all going astray; that you are worshiping idols in place of the living God; that I could wish to tear down every picture in your churches; that the bread and wine of the mass are not Jesus Christ; that I believe the pope of Rome to be the Beast of the Revelation,* whose business it is to deceive the people, and destroy their souls: by all this I should injure your feelings, enrage the people, stir up the persecuting spirit of the emeers and bishops and patriarchs, and then return here just as I am now."

Phares, meanwhile, conversed with calmness and good nature, and listened attentively to all his brother's reasons in justification of his views

* This expression was dictated to him some months before, and he refused to write it, because he considered it blasphemy.

and determinations. But no arguments or evidence could quiet the disconsolate mother. Assad had repeated the name of Christ and the word of God so often that she at last, in a fit of impatience, exclaimed, "Away with Christ, away with the word of God; what have we to do with them?" And when we pointed Assad to some doctrine or counsel in the Bible that seemed applicable to the conversation going on, she would endeavor to close the book in his hands, or catch it from him, as if it taught paganism or witchcraft.

During her stay we dined; and as Assad took a slice of mutton, without scruple, upon his plate, and ate it, in this season of fast, she stood close by, with folded arms, gazing steadfastly upon him, and with a smile of wonder and pity seemed to say in her heart, "Oh fine! oh splendid improvement this upon the holy and venerable traditions of the apostles and fathers!" But she spoke not a word. Her gaze was more expressive than any thing she could have said. Her son, however, gave her but a single glance, smiled at her astonishment and her zeal without knowledge, and kept on with his dinner.

After some hours of troublesome expostulation and entreaty on the part of the mother, during which Assad once rose, saying he could bear it no longer, and shook our hands to depart, it was finally arranged that she should return without him, but that, to save the family from the burning disgrace of which they complained, Assad should furnish her with a paper containing a written declaration that he was not a follower of the English; that he derived not his creed from them; that he believed in the Trinity, that Jesus was God, and that Mary was his mother, etc.; and concluding with a devout invocation of the divine blessing on all who should read the paper. The mother received the document with great satisfaction, and, carefully folding it, put it in her bosom as if it had been one of her choice phylacteries to keep off evil spirits.

"Now," said Assad to them, "go to your home in peace," and turned to leave them; but suddenly, as if recollecting himself, he said, "Phares, I have a word to say to you. I wish you to know that I love you, and I have one request to make of you, and that is, that you

will take the New Testament and read it through attentively." "Give me a New Testament," said Phares, quickly. We handed him a copy, and he went his way, evidently affected and softened by the interview.

About this time our friend fell into deep distress, from apparently a satanic suggestion that the Scriptures were not given by inspiration of God. He was tempted also in another way, viz., by the offer of a rich wife, on condition that he would leave the English. Again, he was informed, by an anonymous letter, that a professed friend of his intended to poison him in his coffee; and one day, being invited down by the family living below in the same house with us, and where this above-said friend was making a call, he took coffee with the rest, and soon after experienced strange sensations which he suspected might be those of poison. He left the company abruptly, and hastened above to the mission family, where, his symptoms increasing, we prepared, as soon as possible, such antidotes as we had on hand, and administered them. He was much alarmed, and twice fell on his knees in prayer, thinking his last hour

was come ; but the remedies acted kindly, and all his alarming sensations quickly subsided.* He blamed himself for being so little on his guard, and said he should take good care how he trusted them again.

On the 16th of March, just two weeks after his escape from the *watch* and *care* of the patriarch at Deir Alma, that paternal head of the Maronite church, having tried various other expedients in vain to recover his lost son, wrote him a kind and fatherly epistle, begging him to return home, and relieve the anxieties of his mother and family at Had-et, and giving him full assurance that he need not fear any measures on his part to interfere with his liberty. His Blessedness would have been glad, no doubt, to obtain his prize without bringing himself under the obligation of a pledge like this, but as nothing else seemed likely to answer the purpose, he adopted this expedient as a last resort.

* There were some circumstances attending the *presentation* of the coffee which hightened the suspicions of poison. The cups were handed singly, and not together upon a waiter: Assad's cup was left to the last, and it was different from the others in having no *zerf*, or under cup. Besides, though Assad rose and retired abruptly, no one seemed surprised or inquired the reason.

Assad had now obtained the very thing he asked for when visited by the patriarch's first three messengers, and which they declared no one dared propose to his Holiness, viz., that he might go home and live in Had-et, with his "*religion unshackled.*"

Assad was sensibly moved and encouraged by this insidious letter, and wrote in return, as we suppose (for we did not see the letter), a favorable reply. It was one of his constitutional weaknesses, that he was too artless and confiding. He had not yet "*known the depths of Satan as they speak.*"

This desired response of Assad was, we may reasonably believe, forthwith transmitted by the patriarch to the family at Had-et, with his priestly requirement that they should seize the golden moment and make sure of the victim before any thing should occur to change his mind. For, the very next day, a deputation consisting of four of the relatives came for him, to escort him on his way to Had-et. One of these deputies was Phares, in whom the others knew that Assad had much confidence, and whose presence, they rightly judged, would increase the

probability of their success. Suffice it to say, that our trustful friend was once more taken in the patriarchal snare.

A majority of our missionary company opposed his going, but not, perhaps, as strenuously as we ought to have done. We knew it was a received and operative maxim with the Romish Church *that faith is not to be kept with heretics*,* yet we did not know how far the patriarch would dare to go in practicing upon it. We all believed he was going into danger. He believed this himself; but he also thought there was now a door open for him prudently to preach the gospel. He could not bear to be shut up

* That this doctrine is one really taught by the Romish Church is often denied. But such denial is of no authority. At least four infallible popes have taught it. The words of Martin V. are these: "*Be assured thou sinnest mortally* if thou keep thy faith with heretics." The Council of Constance notoriously practiced the doctrine, and the Council of Trent approved the doctrine by approving the Council of Constance. If the patriarch could encourage Assad to tell a falsehood, and if a Romanist may *kill* a heretic, may he not break a promise made to him? No pope or council has ever revoked the doctrines of the popes above alluded to, or the canons of the Council of Constance. But it is easy for a Romanist to deny unpopular doctrines. The Bishop of Beirût denies, in his book against Dr. King, that the Romish Church ever persecuted any one or ever consented to such persecution; and an eloquent Romish lecturer from New York lately declared before a public audience in Hartford, Conn., that no Roman Catholic, in any country or age, *ever worshiped an image!*

simply to the use of his pen, as he would be at Beirût, "for," asked he, "who is there in this country that *reads?*" We knew he must suffer persecution, but we surely did not anticipate such a complication of perils and sufferings as that through which he was destined to pass during the whole short remainder of his life.

As he was bidding us his good-morning, expecting to see us again in a few days, one of the sisters of the mission, who had no faith whatever in patriarchal pledges, and who had protested utterly against his departure, said, solemnly, as she took him by the hand, "Assad, I expect never to see your face again in this world." He smiled at what he thought her extravagant apprehensions, returned some quiet answer, and passed from our view. It proved to be, indeed, our final separation. We never saw him more.

CHAPTER VII.

Family excitement at Had-et — Destruction of Scriptures — Assad writes to his bishop on image-worship — Is arrested and surrendered to the patriarch at Deir Alma.

THE next intelligence from the family at Had-et was brought by Phares, just one week after his brother's departure. He came unexpectedly in the morning, in the midst of the tumult and confusion of war, Beirût being at that moment besieged by the Greeks. He gave us the following relation of events as having occurred at his mother's house during the past week. "Yesterday morning," he said, "as I was in my room, reading my New Testament, my brother Mansoor entered, and drawing a sword which he had, struck me with it upon the neck. I continued with the book in my hand until some one snatched it from me. Mansoor afterwards drew up his musket, threatening to shoot me, but my mother interfered, and prevented him.

My brother Tannoos, hearing a bustle, came in with a cane, and, without stopping to inquire at all into the merits of the case, began to cudgel me, calling out, 'Will you quit your heresy, and go to church like other people, or not?'

"Mansoor, not finding Assad present as he seemed to have expected, went right to Assad's chest, which stood near me, seized all the books he had received of you,—Hebrew, Syriac, Arabic, and Italian,—tore them in pieces, one by one, and strewed them on the floor.

"In the course of the day I came down near where the soldiers of the Emeer are encamped, and passed the night in company with my brother Galeb. This morning he returned home with a line from me to Assad, and I came off to Beirût," but without informing Galeb whither he was going.

To this line Assad immediately wrote the following reply, to be taken by Galeb to Phares, at or near the camp:—

"To my beloved brother Phares; the Lord most high preserve him.

"Your departure caused me great grief.

First, because you were impatient when trial and persecution came upon you. It is a thing we are regularly to expect that if we hope in God in this world we shall give universal offense. But we have another city for which we hope. Do not lose your courage, for 'you have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.' Remember we can not share in the glory of Christ if we share not also in his sufferings. Therefore, rejoice whenever you are tried. Rejoice and never be sad, for our faith is sure.

"Secondly, I was grieved because you gave me no information where you were going, and what you intended to do. Now it is not becoming that we should do any thing rashly, that is, till we have prayed to God for direction. Come home, then, and let us set apart a season of fasting and prayer to God, and do what is most agreeable to him. Perhaps it is best to let our works preach in silence in these evil days.

"You must know that if you fail to come home you will give us great pain, and this, you know, would be inconsistent with love. Jesus says, 'By this shall all men know that ye are my

disciples if ye have love one to another.' You well know how much joy and consolation it would give us to see you. Do not then deny us this pleasure, but come at all events. If you do not come, it may be an injury both to yourself and me. I wish to see you, if it be only to say to you two words, and then let you act your pleasure; for not every word can be said with paper and pen. Farewell.

"Your brother and companion in tribulation,

"ASSAD."

This letter, of course, found Phares with us instead of being at the camp. Galeb, who brought it, added all his own influence to that of the letter, to induce his brother to return; but without effect.

We waited three days more, and no farther tidings from Had-et arriving, we sent a special messenger, with a letter to obtain information. On the day after, we received this reply: —

"Your letter came to hand in due time, and I read and understood it. You ask respecting our health. I answer, I am in a state of anxi-

ety, though not so great as some days ago. On Thursday last, having come home from a visit to the Emeer Sul-mán, I found the remnants of the Holy Scriptures torn in pieces, as there is reason to believe, by order of the bishop. When I was told that my brother Mansoor had done this mischief, I returned to the Emeer, and informed him of the affair. He sent to call Mansoor, while I returned again to our house. I now learned that my brother Phares had gone off. After searching for him some time, I went down to the inn in quest of him, but he was not to be found. As I was on my way returning from the inn, where I had gone in search of my brother, I prayed to God that he would take every thing from me, if necessary, only let faith and love toward him remain in my heart.

"As I proceeded on, a man came up and gave me information that all the consuls of Beirût were slain, and that you also were slain with them. The report came from a man who said he had deposited goods with you for safety. In order to be more sure, I asked the man if it were *really* true, and he again assured me that

it was. Ask me not what were my feelings at that moment.

"On reaching home, I heard this terrible news confirmed; at the same time looking out and seeing the heap of ashes near the house, all that remained of eleven copies of the Holy Scriptures and other books which my brothers had destroyed. I burst into tears, and committed all my concerns into the hands of God, saying, 'Blessed be his holy name, the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away;' and so I prayed on, with tears and groanings which I can not describe.

"I afterwards heard that Phares was probably in the neighborhood, and set off to search for him by night, but found him not. When I heard the news of your death confirmed I sent off a messenger, that, wherever Phares might be found, he might return; and when I received his letter, saying that he had gone to your house, I could not yet believe that the report respecting you was false.

"But when the truth respecting this matter began to appear, then I heard, by a person who came to me yesterday evening, that the patri-

arch and the Emeer had made an agreement to put *me* to death, and that they had sent men to lie in wait for that purpose. I was afterwards told, by another person, that some of the servants of the Emeer were appointed to accomplish this end.

"Here I am, then, in a sort of imprisonment; enemies within and enemies without.

"One of my brothers, the other day, advised me to surrender myself entirely to the mercy of the bishop, whereupon I wrote the bishop a letter, of which I send you the inclosed copy, and gave it to my brother Tannoos, begging him to take it to the bishop, and bring me his reply. Tannoos read the letter, and, without saying a word, threw it down in contempt. I then gave it to my uncle, with the same request, but as yet I have had no reply.*

* The letter alluded to was this: "Since in matters of religion we are bound to follow the plain truth as we find it in the word of God, and to set aside all our own carnal and worldly inclinations, if you love Him who came to bear witness to the truth, I ask you to receive and give a few moments' consideration to the things I now suggest to you, and then give me a fitting reply.

"I have had a desire to present to you these thoughts by word of mouth, but feared that the discussion would displease you; but in giving you a *written* communication, I know you have the option either to read it or not, as you choose.

"All my concerns I commit into the hands of God who created me. Through the blood of our Lord Jesus Christ, I hope that all my distresses will be for the best.

"I accept with pleasure all your kind wishes,

"I wish to know how it can be lawful to worship images, or believe in them or bow down before them, since God has said, 'Thou shalt not make unto thee any graven image or any likeness of any thing; thou shalt not bow down thyself unto them nor serve them.' If God has prohibited them, who shall make it lawful to use them for worship?

"Besides, I have seen that many councils have forbidden this worship. The Council of Eliberis says, 'We decide that there ought not to be in the churches any images, lest the people should worship any thing represented on the walls.' The Council of Constantinople, held in the time of the Emperor Leo, and the Council of Constantinople under Constantine Copronymus, ordained that the use of images should be abolished. The Council of Frankfort, with the legate of the pope attending, denounced the second Council of Nice, commonly called the VIIth, which ordained that images should be retained and worshiped.

"St. Irenæus, in commenting on the third chapter of Daniel, and St. Gregory, in his letter, No. 54, with other fathers, forbid the worship of saints; and Epiphanius, in his epistle to John of Jerusalem, says that the Holy Bible forbids the fixing of any human image in a church. Epiphanius says, also, 'Beware how you introduce images, but rather keep the memory of God in your hearts; for it is unbecoming in Christians to be distracted in worship by the sight of the eyes.' St. Clement, of Alexandria, says, 'Whoever attempts to exalt God's excellency by images, does but degrade it.' Tertullian, in his chapter third, reproaches the sculptors and painters on account of their manufacture of images. Pope Gregory, II., in his epistle to the Emperor Leo, wrote thus: 'We do not picture nor represent to the sight, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;' and St. Augustine and St. Epiphanius and others reproach the Carpocratians and the Gnostics because they

and send you many salutations in the Lord, and pray for you length of days."

The writing of this letter may be considered the last act of this persecuted disciple during the free portion of his life. The rest of his history is that of a prisoner of the Lebanon

worshiped the image of Christ; and during the whole first five ages of the church images were not seen in the churches.

"Moreover, if it is not lawful to worship the saints themselves, how can it be lawful to worship their images? especially as it is written, 'Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve.' So St. Paul says (Col. ii. 18), 'Let no man beguile you into a worshiping of angels'; and in 1 Tim. i. 17, 'To God only * be honor and glory.' And so in the Rev. xix. 1, and in the Acts.

"The Council of Laodicea forbade the worship of angels, and the offering of prayer to them. St. Athanasius, in his Sermon 3d against the Arians, and St. Ambrose, in his Exposition of Amos, chapter 3, and Augustine, in his Treatise on True Religion, with many others, denounce the worship of men and angels. St. Augustine says, 'It is not lawful to render the worship of *dulia* to saints while yet alive' (Ag. Faustus, l. 2, c. 21). St. Irenæus remarks that 'those who set lighted candles around the relics of the martyrs, have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.' St. Augustine, in like manner, reproves those who perform such acts of worship at the tombs of the martyrs.

"I beg your reverence to give me an answer on this subject, for I can not believe contrary to the opinions of all these fathers, and at the same time forsake the Word of God.

"Respectfully kissing your footstool, I am, etc.

"*Had-et, March* 25, 1826."

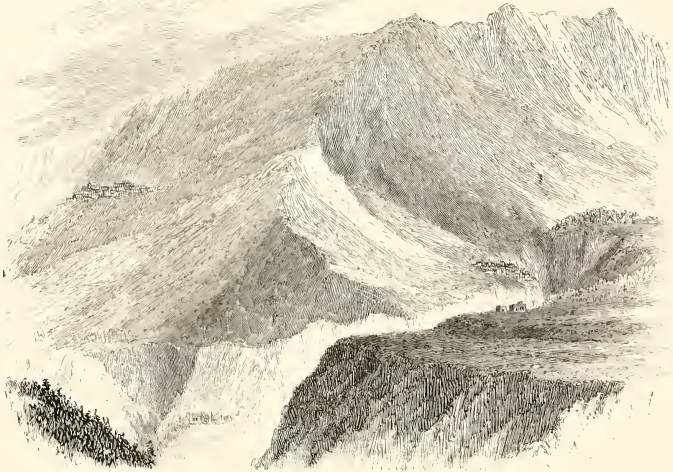
* Arabic translation, the word *wise* being omitted.

Inquisition. On the very night of the date of this letter he was put under arrest, preparatory to his being sent off to his final prison.

On the evening of the fourth of April Phares came to us, direct from the convent of Alma, and informed us that one week before he had gone with Assad and his other brothers to that place, where Assad was given up into the power of the patriarch; that he was still there, and that the patriarch, having just departed for Canobeen, where he was to spend the summer, would send down for Assad to be brought to him in a few days.

He presented us with a slip of paper from his brother, on which was written these words: "If you can find a vessel about to sail for Malta in the course of a few days, send me word; if not, pray for your brother Assad."

To this note we prepared a reply, and sent it the next day, by the hand of a trusty Muslem; but it was not permitted to reach its destination. The messenger was suspected, seized, robbed of his letter, and threatened with further violence. Doubtless he would have fared much worse among the patriarchal guards, had



MT. LEBANON AND THE CONVENT.

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he not shown them that he was a Muslem. Thus ended, for the present, all our hope of aiding Assad in the recovery of his freedom.

The convent of Canobeen, where this noble confessor was to be sent, and where he was destined to wear out the miserable remainder of his life in chains, was situated a two days' journey from Beirût, in one of the wildest recesses of Lebanon. As you arrive near it, from the south, you see the building across a ravine, half-way up the opposite slope, perched like an eagle's nest in apparently an unapproachable cliff. The ravine is frightfully deep, and its sides like perpendicular walls. There is no crossing except by a narrow path, with long windings among the rocks and under overhanging ledges. Think of a prisoner, some dark night, attempting to escape by running a race before his pursuers, across such a ravine.

We learned from Phares some valuable facts connected with his brother's last visit at Had-et and his final removal. At one time, a neighboring emeer being ill, Assad carried him a paper of medicine, on the outside of which he had written some notice of the contents, or

some compliment to the prince himself. When the servant took the medicine to his master, and directed his attention to the paper, he replied, roughly, "A fig for the *paper*, 'tis the *medicine* I want." Assad was near enough to overhear the speech, and he spoke out, saying, "Your Lordship is very right. The truth is with you. The *medicine* is the thing; the paper that holds it is nothing. So it is with the blessed Gospel, which is the medicine for the soul. 'Tis the *pure Gospel* we want, not the church that holds it."

After Mansoor, in his orthodox zeal, had torn up and burned all his Bibles, Testaments, and other like books, Assad could not remain without the Scriptures, but sent to the neighboring little church and obtained a copy, which he read daily, marking the most striking and important passages.

When his relatives, to the number of twenty or more, had collected together, and he perceived that it was their intention to take him by force to the patriarch, he began to expostulate with Tannoos, as being the chief manager in the affair, and besought him to desist from a

step so inconsistent with brotherly love. But he besought in vain. The unnatural brother turned from him with a cold indifference. Affected with his hardness, Assad went aside, and prayed and wept.

In the evening, he at one time addressed the whole assembled company in this manner: "If I had not read the gospel I should have been astonished at this new movement of yours; but now I see through it all. It is just what the gospel has told me to expect; 'The brother shall deliver up the brother to death, and a man's foes shall be they of his own household.' Here, you see, it is just so. You have assembled together here to fulfill this prophecy of the Gospel. What have I done against you? What is my crime that it should have called together such an assemblage? Be it that I take the blessed Bible as my only guide to heaven; does that injure you? Is it a crime that renders me worthy of being taken as a malefactor, and sent into confinement?"

While lying down to sleep, if in their conversation around him he heard them declaring false sentiments, he would rise and do battle

for the truth, till he thought it sufficiently defended, and then resume his couch. One of his uncles, in speaking of his accompanying them the next day, uttered some horrible threats which they would execute if he should presume to attempt an escape, or should give them trouble. "Softly, softly, my dear uncle," replied Assad; "don't be hasty; blessed are the meek." As he was making his preparations to depart on the morning of March 28th, surrounded by men insensible to pity, the mother's heart was deeply moved. However she might differ from him in regard to his new sentiments, she could not bear to see him arrested and forced off under such a guard, as if he had been a murderer. Her grief found vent in a flood of tears. Assad sympathized deeply with her, and after taking leave of her, and turning his back upon that home of his childhood which he was never again to see, he moved off, weeping and praying aloud.

CHAPTER VIII.

Threats against Assad — Messengers to Canobeen — Brutal treatment of Assad — Letter of the patriarch to a prince about him — Galeb visits Canobeen, and Phares Acre. — Both are driven away.

THE Muslem, who took our letter to Deir Alma, brought word back that they were giving out furious threats against Assad at the convent, even to the taking of life. As such threats might now be easily executed, we were more solicitous than formerly to know how far they were made in real earnest.

We waited more than a month, hearing various reports from Canobeen, but none on which we could confidently rely; except, in general, that the man was not yet put to death. We then despatched a messenger, a relative of Assad, to obtain for us some definite information. He went, and in due time returned, saying that Assad could not be seen, under pretense that he was going through a course of

confession, and could not have his attention distracted. He set out a second time, in company with his brother, and it so happened that when he was at about the middle of his journey, he met a messenger from Assad himself, going to Had-et. The messenger told him that his cousin was both in prison and in chains; and, moreover, was beaten a certain number of stripes daily, so that he had sent him as a messenger to his relatives, to beseech them to interpose, and deliver him from his tormentors. The crime for which he suffered, the messenger said, was, that he would not worship the Virgin Mary nor the pictures.

Our friend then gave to his brother a letter, that he might take it on to his cousin, while he himself returned with the messenger to Had-et, to add his influence in interesting the relatives in Assad's behalf. The brother was prospered in the object of his visit. He obtained an interview with his cousin, and brought a reply to his brother's letter, which was this: "To our respected brother, Yoosef el B. After expressing my love to you, I have to say, that your letter by your brother Elceas reached me in

safety, and I have understood it. In it you and —— inquire after my health. May the Lord pour out his grace upon you, and follow you with his blessings. As for me, I am in good bodily health, but as to other circumstances, your brother will give you information. Love to my cousin, your wife. Pray, send me word respecting you every opportunity, and may the Lord lengthen your days. Your brother, A. E. S."

Eleeas had, through the connivance of the keeper, been admitted for two hours into the prison room. He found his cousin sitting on the bare floor, with a heavy chain around his neck, firmly fastened at the other end into the wall. His bed had been removed from him, together with all his books, and *even his pipe*. Assad informed him that he had been sent once to the convent of Kos-hýa, as being possessed of a devil; that he had escaped from the convent, and was making his way toward Tripoli, when he was taken by a party of Maronites, and brought back to the patriarch. He had since that time been kept regularly at Canobeen, subject more or less to insults and beatings. We

understood Eleeas to say that the patriarch encouraged the servants of the convent to spit in his face, and call him by odious names, in order to shame and humble him into obedience.

On hearing all this, we repaired to the consul, to inquire if nothing could be done to induce the civil authorities to interfere in the case. It was concluded to try first what effect might be produced by a consular letter addressed to the patriarch himself. Such a letter was in course of preparation, when our messenger, Yoosef, coming to the knowledge of our plan, pleaded so strongly, and offered such weighty reasons against it, that it was given up, and instead of it Yoosef obtained a communication from one of the young princes of Had-et, a relative of the chief prince, in which there was no positive order given, but, as it should seem, a kindly desire expressed for Assad's release; or, if that could not be done, that at least a milder course of treatment might be pursued. We did not see the letter of the prince, but only the response of his Holiness, which was this: —

"After kissing the hands of your Honorable Excellency, etc., etc. With regard to your

servant, Assad esh Shidiak, the state into which he has fallen is not unknown to your Excellency. His understanding is subverted. In some respects he appears to be a demoniac, in others not. Every day his malady increases upon him, until I have been obliged to take severe measures with him, and put him under keepers, lest he should escape from here, and grow worse, and infuse his poison into others. Two days ago he succeeded in getting away in the night, and obliged me to send men to bind him, and bring him back; and after he was come he showed signs of returning sanity, and begged to be forgiven. But he does not abide by his word, for he is very fickle, and the most probable opinion respecting him is, that he is possessed of the devil.

"However, as he was, to appearance, disposed to yield me obedience, I treated him kindly and humanely, and used every means to promote his permanent cure.

"This is what I have to communicate to your Excellency, and the bearer will inform you further. Whatever your Excellency commands I obey, and the Lord lengthen your life.

"YOOSEF, *Patriarch of Antioch.*"

Some three or four weeks after this information from Canobeen, the brother, Tannoos, much to our astonishment, made us a neighborly call. He had just received a letter from Assad, in which he declared himself in an extremity of suffering, and perhaps had not long to live, begging him to come up, and see if something could not be done to stop, or at least to abate, the cruelty of his treatment.

Tannoos declared that he would be very glad to get him away from Canobeen if he could be *safe* any where else. He might be safe at the consul's, but in no other place at Beirût. "There are men in these mountains," said he, "that can kill, and *have* killed patriarchs and emeers, and that, too, in their own houses, and why could they not kill Assad with you if they chose? A man in entering your house for such a purpose would violate all law, to be sure, but the English would not make war for the killing of a single man."

When told that very possibly an application would be made by the consul to the Pasha if Assad were held long in his present situation, he replied that such a step would be quite use-

less. "The Pasha," he said, "would send the application to the Emeer, and do you think the Emeer would not know how to arrange the matter to suit his own purpose? He knows well how to dispose of such kind of business. He has known how to manage these mountains for forty years, and do you think he would be at any loss in so trifling a case as this? For example, what would be more easy than for the Emeer, if he wished to retain the man, to say that he had committed murder, and, of course, could not be surrendered?"

"But such a charge must be established by competent witnesses, and under the consul's inspection."

"True; but do you imagine there would be any difficulty in that? The Emeer would bring *five hundred witnesses to-morrow* to prove it. And as to his fearing the Pasha, though he holds his office under him, yet his power is even superior to the Pasha's.

"The patriarch, also," continued Tannoos, "can do just what he chooses, in spite of the English. You have brought books here, and the patriarch has burned them in spite of you.

He has issued a proclamation to all denominations, full of lies, against you, and what have you been able to do? You have, indeed, written a reply to the proclamation, and you hold it up to the people, and say, 'Look here, and see how the patriarch lies about us'; but what cares he for all that? He goes on just as before."

The next day after this interview with Tannoos, came Phares, bringing with him the following letter from the patriarch, just received by the family: —

"After assuring you of my long desire to see you in all health and prosperity, I send you news respecting the wretch, Assad esh Shidiak, otherwise called Rab-shoon.* His obduracy, with which you are acquainted, has exceedingly increased. It is not unknown to you how much care I have bestowed upon him for his good; how much I have labored for his salvation; and under what severe discipline I have put him; and all to no effect. And now, as might

* This term is composed of the word *rab* or *rub*, vulgar Arabic, and the Syriac word *sheol*, together meaning the *chief of the infernal world.*

be expected, he has fallen ill, and therefore can no longer run away, according to his custom, and we have thus been constrained to abate the severity of our treatment. But fearing lest his disease should increase upon him, I have sent you word that you may come and see how he is, and consult what is best to be done with him. Make no delay, therefore, in coming, and the apostolic blessing be upon you."

In compliance with these concurring requests both of the sufferer and the tormentor, Tannoos set out immediately for Canobeen. The mother, contrary to the will of the family, positively insisted on going with him. She expressed a strong desire to call on the missionaries at Beirût, on their way, for she said the missionaries were the only persons that had any sympathy for her suffering son. In this desire of hers, however, she was overruled.

In a week or more the two returned to Had-et, bringing information that they had found Assad in prison, and chained by the neck, as had been previously reported, but that when they left him he was in comfortable bodily health. The mother had already had her feelings much out-

raged by the inhuman manner in which the Maronites had treated her son, but had never believed that the patriarch had gone so far as to put him in chains till she saw it with her own eyes.

By the beginning of October most of the Shidiak family began to regret that they had surrendered their relative to such a severity of discipline, and united in an effort to obtain leave of the patriarch to take him under their care. Galeb, being furnished by his brother Mansoor with a letter to the patriarch, in the name of the whole family, set off with a strong determination to bring his brother away. Mansoor, however, though wishing his release, still breathed out threatening and slaughter against him, in case he should, after being liberated, presume to come again to the missionaries.

Galeb was gone ten days, at the end of which he returned, bringing with him a patriarchal reply to the family letter, in these words, omitting the common preface: —

"We have received your epistle, and understood all its contents. Your relative, Galeb, has also been here, and informed us verbally of your wishes.

"With regard to Assad, he needs no medical aid whatever as to his body, he being at present in the most perfect health, therefore give yourselves no uneasiness about him in this respect; but as to other particulars in regard to him, the Lord look down and pity. Our son Galeb has seen him with his own eyes. The blessing be upon you."

It seems that the reason assigned, in the family letter, why Assad should be removed was his ill health and the need of medical aid. They may have been sincere in giving this as *one* of the reasons in favor of his release, for he had been reported ill more than once, and that by the patriarch himself; and what he had undergone was more than enough to make him permanently so.

His Holiness, Galeb said, was considerably embarrassed by the application from the family, sometimes remaining silent to his questions, sometimes consenting, and then again refusing to give up the "*wretch*." He finally made out the above reply for Galeb to take home to the family, and gave it him, requesting his return without any longer delay. This time more

was still reluctant to go, till at length his Holiness, wearied with his importunity, thrust him by force, with his baggage, out of the convent, and shut the door in his face.

Stung with this insult, and with his disappointment, Galeb returned with feelings of strong hostility to the patriarch, and was ready to adopt any measures whatever to free Assad from his clutches. He said it was the intention of the patriarch to keep Assad in confinement till the time should expire for which our houses were rented at Beirût, when he should endeavor to take measures for preventing our obtaining any others. It was to effect this object, as Phares informed us, that the Bishop of Beirût lately came down to reside at the city, when he was driven away by the hostile attack of the Greeks.

A few weeks after this Phares determined to make a bold push to Acre, and see if he could not get the ear of the Pasha in his brother's behalf. He went, and made application first to a Maronite scribe in the Pasha's service, once a stout known friend of his brother's; but the man has also ve nothing to do with the matter, and of your wish

it is probable that through his influence, when Phares presented his petition to the Hoznodar, and afterwards to the sight of the Pasha himself, as he was going to the mosque, he was denied access, and even rudely pushed out of the way. So poor Phares came back disappointed and discouraged.

Mansoor and Tannoos were soon informed of Phares's visit to the Pasha, and were much enraged about it. The latter of the two brothers repaired immediately to Deir el Kom-mer, either to clear the family from all suspicion of being connected with Phares in his visit to Acre, or to have the prince put on his guard against interfering to liberate the prisoner, in case a demand from the Pasha should be sent him to that effect. Phares anticipated trouble, and took refuge with us. His relatives came to take him home, but he refused to go. They reported that the brothers would be punished on his account unless they brought him home; that Sheikh Mansoor ed Dahh-dahh, prime minister of the Emeer Besheer, had commanded Tannoos to bring him *dead or alive*. This brother, we were told, had of late become more

fiery than ever, and might be seen, as he walked by himself, lifting his hand in a threatening attitude, as if he would say, with Voltaire, "*Crush the wretch!*"

Before this commotion about Phares had fully subsided, early one morning came the champion in chief, Mansoor, accompanied by his mother, both appearing to be under some new and special excitement. The mother began immediately, even before suffering herself to be seated, to throw out severe reproaches against us for our having brought upon their family so much distress and dishonor. After being respectfully invited to take seats, and to inform us what new thing had occurred to wound their sensibilities, they informed us that Galeb had been to Canobeen, and taken Assad from the convent by stealth, in the night, and brought him homeward as far as Kesruân, where the Emeer Abdallah had intercepted the run away, and brought him bound to Gazeer, and that the family had written to the Emeer, requesting that he would refrain from punishing him, but deliver him once more to the patriarch. Galeb had fled, as was supposed, to a friendly prince of the neighborhood.

They now expected that the princes of Had-et would require, on very severe conditions, that the family should seek out and deliver up both Galeb and Phares, to be suitably dealt with. Their object in coming now was to see Phares, and make arrangements for his present safety. Not being able to see him, Mansoor took out his pen, and wrote to his brother as follows: —

"To our beloved Phares. I wish to tell you that Yoosef Ca-nâân informed me, at the house of our uncle Aboo Hassan, that, at the instance of our brother Galeb and our uncle Mrâd,* Tannoos Heical brought our brother Assad from Canobeen, and that two men, sent by the Emeer Abdallah, came to the house of the father of Tannoos and took Assad to the Emeer. We went straightway to the Emeer B., of Baabda, with our mother, and begged of him a letter to the Emeer Abdallah, to request him not to inflict on Assad any punishment. We afterwards understood that the Emeer had sent him to our lord the patriarch. This is what we have heard. Tannoos Heical and Giffâl are in

* This was the furious uncle who was one of the three that first visited Assad at our house, after his escape from Deir Alma.

Agosta, and Galeb and Mrâd have gone to the Emeer Shedeed Mrâd.

"As for you, my brother, let it suffice what Assad has done. Take good heed. Put your understanding in your head, and come back. You are pursuing a course which will bring trouble on your brother; for if the patriarch comes to hear of your being at Beirût, he will treat Assad with greater severity."

This letter was immediately forwarded to Phares, but it did not induce him to come back. He was already on board a vessel just ready to sail for Alexandria.

The next day Galeb ventured out to us from his hiding-place in the city. He was pale and weak, through exposure and sickness, and was much depressed in spirits. He had been out in the cold rains of November, while on his mountain expedition, and when he had hoped to be on hand to aid his brother in his flight, he was sick and confined to his bed. Having made his way with some difficulty to Beirût, he was now hid in the house of a friendly Muslem.

The plan devised for Assad's liberation was, doubtless, due to Galeb; and his unfortunate

illness and separation from his associates, like the fall of a leader in battle, was the natural cause of its failure. In going toward Kesruán, there was but one path leading from Canobeen, and this almost impassable in the night, being in general scarcely wide enough for more than a single passenger at a time, leading along the fearfully steep and rocky sides of the ravine previously described. The fugitive, moreover, was weak in body, and, by long confinement, had lost the proper use of his limbs. Accordingly, it was told that, having passed but a part of the way up on the opposite slope from the convent, he sunk down exhausted, exclaiming, "I can go no farther." He had hardly had time to take breath when a noise was heard at a distance, as if from men in pursuit, and his friends pressed him to a new effort, saying, "Rouse up, man; we must go. Don't you hear them coming? We can't wait, and be taken prisoners with you." So they helped him up the hill, and managed to keep clear of their pursuers. For some days and nights they continued their weary walk, till they reached the neighborhood of their relatives in Kesruan.

But the Emeer Abdallah, being informed by the patriarch of Assad's escape, naturally sent his officers there to search for him; and there the man was found, and immediately brought down to Gazeer, the prince's village.

He had now been out from four to six days, without a fixed home, without comfortable rest, and exposed to the bad November weather of the mountains, and, for a refinement of cruelty, either with or without the orders of the Emeer, he was now, as it was told, stripped of his outer clothes and cap, and made to walk bareheaded, barefooted, and hand-bound, up the stony mountain paths, to Canobeen. What awaited him at the convent will be told elsewhere.

A few days subsequent to these excitements, the brother Mansoor very unexpectedly called in upon us, and chatted familiarly for half an hour, like an old, friendly neighbor. He remarked that, within the past four years, the state of religion in these mountains had undergone an entire change. Before this period you would hear no one blaspheme or lie or do any thing of the sort (?), but every one attended prayers in the church with all regularity, and

lived in peace with his neighbors. At present the case is reversed, and nobody could deny that the Protestants were more upright in their life, and more conformed to the requirements of the Gospel than the Maronites. The Scriptures we had brought into the country were perfectly correct and true, and no fault could be found with them; but the patriarch feared that if the people read these Bibles they would become heretics, and so he prohibited them; and now there was no other way for the people but to submit to his orders. To oppose the will of the patriarch in this thing would have no other effect than to bring disgrace and ruin upon one's self and family. For example, the family of Shidiak was once rich and honorable, but is now in poverty and extreme disrepute. "My uncle," said he, "has three daughters, and if we had suffered Assad to go on in his own way, not one of these daughters would ever have been married. I was myself under an engagement of marriage, and was to have received with my wife fifteen hundred piastres; now I am to have nothing. Don't think, sir, that this country is like a land of liberty, where

men may fearlessly speak the truth. There's no way of getting along here but by management and lies. Assad has turned out a heretic, and we report him insane, so we avoid half our disgrace. Now Phares has taken it into his head to follow Assad's example, and we shall not report that he has become a Protestant, but that, as he went to Acre to accuse the patriarch, he has now run away for fear of punishment."

As soon as Galeb's attempt and failure had become known to the family at Had-et, and while Mansoor and the mother were searching, as has been said, after Phares, Tannoos, and a cousin by name of Giffal,* undertook to quiet the fury of the patriarch. They prepared and forwarded a letter, in which they declared that they had no part nor concern nor responsibility in the matter. The reply of his Holiness is here introduced, to illustrate still further the spirit by which he is governed: —

"The apostolic blessing rest upon our respected children, sheikh Giffâl and sheikh Tannoos esh Shidiak. The Lord bless them. Amen.

* The same who is mentioned by Mansoor in his letter to Phares.

"We received yours in due time, and rejoiced in the news of your health and prosperity.

"We are well assured of the diligence you have used in the matter of Phares thus far, and of his brother, the wretch, *Rabshoon*.

"With regard to us, perhaps you learned sufficiently, son Tannoos, when you were here with us, that we have no other object in view than that of opposing those wretched individuals [the Protestant missionaries], and to prevent them from scattering abroad their poison.

"We have, indeed, laid under excommunication all those who attempt or assist in, or in any way favor, the escape of the miserable *Rabshoon*, but as you two were not concerned in the late attempt of this kind, you, of course, are not affected by the excommunication. Your brother Galeb, when he came hither, brought us a letter in the name of the whole family of Shidiak. We know not whether it was a true letter or a forgery. Since it has not pleased God to open the way for the escape of the thrice wretched Rabshoon, nor for the infusion of his poison, it remains for you to make sure work of his

brother Phares, according as you have been ordered. If you can but accomplish this, you will do away all suspicion, and stand justified before God and men.

"We need no additional evidence to bring to light the evil that was done, and was likely to be done, by Rabshoon and his brother Phares. As for you, we wish you nothing but all bodily and spiritual health, that no molestation whatever may come upon you from this matter. Let this suffice, and the apostolic blessing be upon you twice and thrice."

CHAPTER IX.

Sheikh N. and priest of Canobeen — Account of Assad's sufferings by the priest — His sufferings, his attempts to escape — Discussions.

TOWARD the close of December an interesting young sheikh, from Eh-he-den, in the neighborhood of Canobeen, came to us, and spent a number of weeks in our families. He was in correspondence with a relative of his, who was a priest in the convent of Canobeen. On the 29th of January he received a letter from the priest, in which was this paragraph: "By leave of his Holiness, I am now passing most of my time in company with Assad esh Shidiak (the Lord enlighten his mind), and he once remarked to me, in conversation, that you would not remain long with the Protestants without being shaken in your faith. I could not conceive why he should say this."

The day after receiving this letter, the sheikh,

according to previous arrangement, returned to his mountain home, and in his communication announcing to us his safe arrival, he adds, "With regard to our persecuted brother, the priest, whom you know, has told us that he is now in a comfortable situation compared with what he was; for this priest has obtained of the patriarch the favor of having sole charge of him. Before, they gave the poor man nothing to eat but six thin cakes of bread in a day, but now the priest has got off his chains, and gives him ten cakes of bread, with a little cooked victuals in the afternoon, and has restored to him his upper garment and vest and a handkerchief, for, poor fellow, he was almost naked.* The priest says that Assad is under oath not to attempt to escape from under his hand.

Ten days later, the sheikh informs us that, at the dictation of this priest, he is writing a history of the events that have happened to Assad since the time of his being betrayed by his family into the hands of the patriarch. This account, after a short interval, the sheikh sent us for our perusal, and though by no

* And this in the mountains, in mid-winter.

means a complete history, nor from an eye-witness in regard to all the recorded facts, is yet the most satisfactory of any we could procure. It was as follows: —

"When the relatives of Assad brought him to the convent of Alma, in the district of Kesruan, and gave him up to the patriarch, the latter began, by way of flattery, to promise him all the worldly advantages he could bestow; but, withal, demanding that he should put away all the heretical notions and all the corrupt science which the Bible-men, those enemies of the pope, had taught him. He replied, 'These things which you hold out to me, are to me of no value. I no longer trouble myself about them, for they are vain, and of short duration. Every Christian is bound to think and labor and strive to be accounted worthy to hear that blessed welcome, "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

"'As to rejecting from my mind those things which I have learned from the Bible-men, I have to say, that for many years I had read occasionally the Holy Scriptures, which are

able to make us wise unto salvation, but could not live according to them, for I was given to the indulgence of all wicked passions; but since my acquaintance with these men I see myself, through the merits of my Saviour, possessed of a new heart, and yet a heart which I confess is not, in all respects, such as I could wish it to be.'

"During the few days that they remained in Kesruan the patriarch showed him every attention, and suffered no one to oppose his opinions, saying that 'the Protestants, by the great sums they have given him, have blinded his eyes, and inclined him to join them, and diffuse their poisonous sentiments, so that he can not at once be brought to leave them. Let him alone for the present; do nothing to oppose or to offend him until we shall arrive at Canobeen, where we may examine into his faith and state of mind at our leisure, and if we find that he still clings to his heresy, we can then do with him as circumstances may require.'

"After a short time they proceeded with him to Canobeen, and there began to use arguments to convince him of his errors, and to persuade

him to confess and forsake them, and to embrace whatever the church and the councils had enacted; requiring that he should surrender his conscience to the holy Catholic Church, and bless all whom she blessed, and curse all whom she cursed; and this they did in the most stern and dictatorial manner. He replied, 'It has been said by the mouth of the Holy One, "*Bless, and curse not.*"' They still pressed him to yield his opinions, but he said, 'I can give up nothing, nor can I believe any thing but as it is written in the Holy Scriptures, for in these are contained all doctrines necessary to salvation.' 'But,' said they, 'is every thing worthless that has been ordained by the councils and the fathers?' He answered, 'The councils may have enacted laws good for themselves, but *we* are not bound to follow them.'

"When they had urged him day after day to no purpose, they finally asked, in despair, 'Are you, then, still of the same sentiment?' 'Yes,' said he, 'of the same sentiment. I still believe and hold whatever is written in the Holy Scriptures, and neither more nor less.' 'Will every one, then, who reads the gospel be saved?'

'By no means; but, as it is written, "He that hath my commandments and *keepeth* them, he it is that loveth me."' 'Is it the duty of every person to possess the gospel, and read it?' 'Yes, it is the duty of every one. "For," said Paul, "if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, in whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them that believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel should shine unto them."'* They then reviled him,

*In August, 1859, Antonio Yanni, a native convert of Tripoli, being in Eh-heden, near Canobeen, on business for some days, five Maronites were with him at one time, and bore the following testimony, corroborative of the above. (The words were written down by Yanni, and translated and forwarded to America by Rev. Mr. Jessup):—

"Priest Abdullah ed Dwyhee said, 'At the first the patriarch argued with him, and Assad answered with all firmness and with strong proofs from the Scriptures, according to the interpretation of his own fanaticism, and the crookedness of his words. Afterwards the patriarch sent for the bishops to come and talk with him, and asked them what they thought of him; and Assad remained fixed in his way. Then the patriarch flattered him, and made him the promise of presents and gifts, but Assad did not accept any of these. Then the patriarch sent a command through all his district, and summoned all the teachers and learned men to dispute with Assad, and I went among them, and addressed him thus: 'O, Assad, you are my teacher. Why has Satan made you thus to err, so that you have reached this fanaticism and heresy? Why do you thus reject the doctrine of our holy church, which can not deceive nor be deceived, and whose head is our lord the pope, who has the keys, and is infallible? Where are

and spurned him away from their sight, and began to meditate measures of violence against him. He was separated from all around him, and compelled to take his meals by himself; and lest he should attempt to escape, a person was set over him, to keep him under a constant watch. He was made to feel himself in the lowest state of disgrace, all taking the fullest liberty to reproach and ridicule him.

"From this state of debasement he soon began to meditate his escape. Accordingly, one evening, just as the sun had set, and while the keeper's eye was off him, he fled. An immediate and diligent search was made for him, but he could not be found until the second day, when he was discovered still hiding in a grove

your father and mother who died in this faith? Where are the people and saints who died in this belief? Are they all lost?'

"Then Assad replied, 'I am not a deceiver, nor do I speak contrary to the Holy Scriptures; but I wish all men to study the Bible, and leave all the inventions of men. As to what you say of the saints and others, who died in your belief, I know nothing of them, nor has Christ given me any information on the subject, neither have his apostles. But I know, from the Holy Bible, what Christ said, "He who loveth me, him will my Father love, and we will make our abode with him; and whoso loveth me not, him will my Father judge." The Christian will walk in the way of Christ, and all know that the violation of God's law ruins both the soul and body in hell.'"

near by, for he was totally ignorant of the way he ought to take. They brought him immediately to the patriarch. When he arrived he was met by reproaches and revilings; and the servants, by order of the patriarch, beat him, and put him in confinement. This was at Dimân, a pleasant, airy situation, belonging to Canobeen, and about an hour's distance from it. Soon after this he was taken to the latter place, where he was left a little more at large, but was always under the watch of a keeper.

"One evening, when all had gone into the chapel for prayers, he lay as if he had been asleep, and the monk, his keeper, thinking him really so, went in with the rest, but took with with him, as a precaution, Assad's silver inkhorn; supposing that if he should wake, and think of escaping, he would not be willing to go, leaving behind him so valuable an article. When Assad saw that all were gone, knowing the length of their prayers, he at once left the convent, and ran about an hour's distance. People were despatched in search of him with all diligence, but they returned without finding him. On account of his ignorance of the

way, he remained secreted near the road till the day broke, when he continued his flight until he had reached a distance of three hours or more from his prison, when a couple of men in the service of the patriarch, having been apprised of his escape by the pursuers during the night, discovered him, and called out, 'Who are you? Are you Assad?' He replied, 'I am Assad.' They at once took him into custody, and brought him, though without any violence or indignity, back to the patriarch.

"A different treatment, however, awaited him at the convent. He had no sooner reached it than they covered him with insult, beating him and mocking him and saying, 'Fool that you are, why did you answer to your name?' He replied, 'God has laid a curse upon the lying lips, and therefore I can not use them.' They said, 'If you do not return to your faith, and hold to all that has been ordained by the church and the fathers, you are ruined. You will die under your tortures, and go to perdition.' He replied, 'Whosoever shall call on the name of the Lord shall be saved. I am willing to expose myself to every indignity and

suffering for the sake of Him who loved us and shed his precious blood for our salvation. These things I am bound to say and do, and I am bound to exhort you, also, to the same course, as being my beloved friends.'

"When he had said this they all laughed him to scorn, called him a mad man, and were going to beat him, for attempting, as they pretended, to make heretics of them. As he saw their anger, he cried out, 'Why are you enraged at me, and what are you about to do to me? I am a dying man like yourselves, and preach unto you that ye should turn from your vanities unto the living God, who made heaven and earth, the sea and all that are therein.' They then renewed their cries that he was mad, and thrust him into his prison-room, and locked the door upon him, and strict orders were given that no one should say any thing to him, more or less. In this state he remained for some days.

"The patriarch then sent messengers to him, to inquire after his faith, especially respecting his trust in the images of the church, declaring to him that without faith in these he could not

be saved. He replied, 'Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshiping of angels.' They brought him proofs from the councils that images were used by the fathers, and ought to be set up and worshiped in the churches in honor of the saints, and to obtain their intercession. He answered, 'I will also bring you proof from the councils that the worship of images and all use of them in the churches were forbidden and reprobated by the fathers.' Here they contradicted him. 'Be it as it may,' said he, 'it is impossible for me to follow the opinions of any man or set of men, and leave the Word of God behind me. This word tells me, that forasmuch as we are the offspring of God, we ought not to think that the godhead is like unto gold or silver or stone, graven by art or man's device.' The messengers then quit him, and made their report to the patriarch, who left him in his prison for a considerable time, in the most degraded and suffering state.*

* A monk of the convent of Mar Sarkees, in Eh-heden, made the following statement to Mr. Yanni, at the interview to which reference has already been made: "I was once at the patriarch's

"In process of time certain individuals possessed of a little humanity, became interested in his situation, sympathized in his sufferings, interceded for him, and obtained leave to open the prison doors, so that any one who chose could go in and see him without restraint.

"Again he began to meditate an escape, and on a certain evening set off from the convent. But, as before, his ignorance of the proper path to escape in prevented the accomplishment of his purpose. He soon saw the lighted torches streaming off in every direction, in search of him, and, to avoid his pursuers, he turned aside a short distance, and climbed into a tree.

when Assad was in prison, and a priest from the convent of Mar Abda el Meshammar came to the patriarch, and said, 'Send me to this man in error, that I may convert him.' The patriarch answered, 'Do not boast yourself in your long beard, for many learned men have gone to discuss with him, and have profited nothing. How, then, canst thou do it, thou father of a long beard?'

"The priest however went, with Simon, the steward, and I was with him. (This Simon, of Sirail [Sibail?] who was once a servant of the French consul in Tripoli, and afterwards in the service of the patriarch, is now with Bishop Boolus, of Tripoli.) The priest disputed with Assad, but had no success. He feared to return to the patriarch, being ashamed of his failure; so he beat Assad twice, and kicked him twice; and the steward, also, gave him a fearful beating. But Assad did not utter a word; he only put his head on his hand, and wept a long time."

From this situation he did not dare to come down till the night was fairly gone, when he shifted the position of his clothes, turning his outer garment inside out, using his turban for a girdle, and his girdle for a turban, and took his way.

"He had, however, not proceeded far when one of the patriarch's men discovered him, and called out, 'Assad, is it you?' He answered, 'It is I.' The man immediately caught him, like a greedy wolf, bound him, beat him, and drove him before him, as a slave or a brute, to Canobeen. In the way they were met by many others who had been sent off in quest of him, who all united with the captor in his brutal treatment.

"On his arrival at the convent, the patriarch gave immediate orders for his punishment; and they fell upon him with reproaches, caning him and smiting him with their hands; and so it was, that as often as they struck him on one cheek he turned to them the other also. 'This,' said he, 'is a joyful day to me. My blessed Lord and Master has said, "Bless them that curse you; and if they strike you on the right

cheek turn to them the left also." This I have been enabled to do; and I am ready to suffer even more than this for Him who was beaten and spit upon and led as a sheep to the slaughter on our account.' When they heard this they fell to beating him anew, saying, 'Have we need of your preaching, you deceiver? Of what avail are such pretensions as yours, who are in the broad road to perdition?' He replied, 'He that believeth that Jesus Christ is the Son of God hath eternal life.' 'Ah,' said they, 'this is the way you are blinded. Your salvation is by *faith alone in Christ;* thus you cast contempt on his mother and on his saints. You believe not in the presence of his holy body on the earth.' And they threw him on the ground, and overwhelmed him with the multitude of their blows.

"For three successive days he was subjected to the bastinado, by order of the patriarch; who, after that, summoned him to his presence, and demanded of him his faith. He answered, 'I am a Christian, a follower of Jesus of Nazareth.' Those present exhorted him to acknowledge the intercession of the saints, and to repair

to them for help in this hour of trial. But he refused, saying, 'My help is in Him who shed his blood for sinners.' 'But have the saints no intercession, and is it vain to worship them?' He answered, 'We are not taught to seek help or protection from any but from him who is the Great Shepherd, who has said with his own blessed mouth, "Come unto me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." To any other than God we are not commanded to pray or seek for refuge.'

"They then returned him to his prison as before. Those who sympathized with him went and begged him to confess that the canons of the councils were binding on all Christians, and that the images were very properly made use of in the churches. He answered, that, 'Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like unto corruptible man.' At this they turned away from him in despair and disgust, and reported to the patriarch that he was in the most confirmed state of obstinacy, and was, doubtless, possessed of a devil.

"Upon this, the patriarch ordered him to be

put in chains, and the door to be barred upon him as formerly, and his food to be given him in short allowance.* In this condition he re-

*It was probably at this point that the visit of his mother and his brother Tannoos occurred, which the priest, in this history, passes over, but the result of which comes to us from another narrator.[1] The account is as follows: "When the cruelty of the patriarch became excessive, and Assad was reduced to the greatest straits, he wrote to his brother Tannoos, praying and beseeching that he would come and intercede for him with the patriarch. Tannoos and his mother, therefore, went to Canobeen, and sent word to the patriarch at De-mân, begging his leave to bring out Assad from his prison, peradventure he would reform. The patriarch gave order accordingly. The mother wept over her son, and besought him to yield to the will of the patriarch, and he would set him at liberty. Tannoos also began to reprove him, and to set before him the consequences of his obstinacy, begging him to let alone his discussions, and then he would become his sponsor to the patriarch, and would go with him home, and after that, to some other place of safety. Assad gave his consent. Then Tannoos wrote to De-mân, to inform the patriarch of this, and ask of him the favor of permitting Assad to enjoy the open portions of the convent. So he was given leave to walk at large about the convent, avoiding all discussion. With this his mother and brother were highly gratified, and began to hope for his entire release.

"So they went the next day to De-mân, to pay their respects to his Blessedness, to whom they gave information of what had been done. 'Oh,' said the patriarch, 'that has been done many times, but afterwards he always returns to his old course.' So indeed it happened; for the very same evening Assad wrote to his brother that it was quite impossible for him to remain in silence, and abstain from preaching the gospel. When the patriarch heard of the letter he was again angry, and gave orders to remand the prisoner back to his cell; and all the hopes of Tannoos being cut off, he returned with his mother to Had-et, leaving his brother in that situation."

1 Bootrus Bustani, of Beirût.

mained till he was much reduced, and began to entreat them to have pity on him, and take off the irons from his feet, and open the door of his prison. Some were moved by his supplications, interceded for him, unbarred the door, took off his chains, and left him. He arose, walked out, and sat down with one of them, and conversed. He then begged the patriarch to give him some books to copy, to rid himself of the tedium of his idleness. But he refused, nor would he suffer any one to hold conversation with him.

"After some days there came into the convent two men in the character of beggars, and wished to pass the night, but were turned away. That same night Assad made another attempt to escape. As soon as it was discovered that he was gone, a vigorous search was made to find him, but all to no purpose. The universal cry now was, that the two men already mentioned had been sent by the Protestants, to steal him away, for a large reward. Immediately his Holiness, the patriarch, sent letters to the Emeer Abdallah, informing him of Assad's escape, and requesting him to guard the roads

leading to Kesruán, and search the neighborhood, if, possibly, Assad might still be found lurking in that district. Accordingly, search was made. Assad was discovered among his relatives, by a couple of soldiers, and was bound, and taken to the Emeer, who sent him directly to the patriarch.

"On his arrival he was loaded with chains, cast into a dark, filthy room, and bastinadoed every day for eight days, sometimes fainting under the operation, until he was near death. He was then left in his misery, his bed a thin flag mat, his covering his common clothes. The door of his prison was filled up with stone and mortar, and his food was six thin cakes of bread a day, and a cup of water.*

* Tannoos ed Droyhee, of Eh-heden, an acquaintance of Assad, who had done him friendly offices in his confinement, affirmed to Mr. Yannin, that he was present when Assad was returned bound to Canobeen, by the Emeer Abdallah.

He said, "When Assad arrived, the patriarch ordered him to be beaten, and laid a curse upon all who would not beat him. Then I arose, with Bootrus Ma-ow-wud and the scribe Michael (now a priest), and we beat him enough to have killed him, but he did not die. We broke up several green sticks upon him; yet all this he bore patiently, and did not speak a bad word. This power of forbearance was from the satan that was dwelling in him. He imitated St. Stephen, saying, 'Lord Jesus, lay not this sin to their charge.' All this, as though he were a devil incarnate. After

In this loathsome dungeon, from which there was no outward passage, and into which there was no place of entrance except a small loophole through which they passed him his food,* he lay

this, they put him in a cave, and put a chain on his neck, and built a high wall, and forbade men from his society, except the learned. These had permission to converse with him. He could not go out, even for the necessities of nature. Then they thought that he was writing letters to the Bible-men, and took away all his pens and ink, leaving only his bedding and his books, among which was his Bible. At length he asked of the steward a cup of vinegar, and he had pity on him, and gave it to him. He then took a nail and put it in the vinegar until it rusted, and commenced writing with it concerning his condition. We do not know whether he sent any of his writings to the Bible-men. They say that a man used to come, disguised as a beggar, and took and brought letters. But afterwards some of the priests saw him writing with the nail, and took away the vinegar, and forbade the steward to give him any more. Then he took a needle and thread, and wrote with them on his bed-quilt, all the story of his imprisonment. This cloth is still in the possession of the patriarch, and the Maronite people have seen it. Some of the priests who were friends to Assad used to come to him, and say, 'Oh, Assad, just declare that you are a Maronite, and you can go free.' But the obstinate fellow would not lie. He had this peculiar custom that he would never tell a lie. Once they brought a crucifix and coals of fire, and beat him, saying, 'Either kiss the crucifix or the fire.' *He kissed the fire*, but would not kiss the crucifix. But he raised the crucifix over his head, saying, 'I honor the One that was put to death on the cross.'

* Mr. Bistani, in his Arabic memoir of Assad, adds the follow-lowing fact: That through this loophole a rope was passed, tied round his neck at one end, and fastened at the other to some fixture outside. Any one who passed might pull upon it. It was reported that, on one occasion, when the inmate of the dungeon was found to be kneeling in prayer inside, a rude hand laid hold of the rope, and drew it violently, throwing the unsuspecting suppliant senseless upon the floor.

several days, and he would lift up his voice, and cry, 'Love ye the Lord Jesus Christ according as he hath loved us, and given himself to die for us. Think of me, O ye that pass by; have pity upon me, and deliver me from these sufferings.'

"Now when his groans and cries were thus heard, a certain priest who had been a former friend of Assad, was touched with compassion. His feeling of former friendship revived; his bowels yearned over his suffering brother; and he besought every one who could speak with the patriarch, that they would intercede, and endeavor to soften his feelings toward his prisoner. By earnest perseverance, the priest at length succeeded, and obtained permission to open the prison door of his friend, and take off his irons. The first request he made of the priest, on his entering the prison, was, that he would give him a little food, for he was famishing with hunger. The priest immediately brought him a little bread and cooked victuals, which he ate, and said, 'The name of the Lord be blessed.'

"Those present again began to exhort him

to turn to the mother of God, if peradventure she would have mercy upon him, and bring him back to the way of salvation. He answered, 'If she has the power of intercession, let her intercede for us with her beloved Son.' The priest was very assiduous in supplying him with every thing necessary for his comfort. In particular, he obtained the return of his clothes, of which he had been partly stripped; for the snow was upon the ground, and the cold filled him with pains.

"Now when the others saw the care and attentions of the priest, they said, 'You have become a convert to his heretical opinions.' But he replied, 'God has said, "*Blessed are the merciful*,"' and he continued firm in his purpose. His care for his friend was such that, whenever he left the convent for any time, he would give money to the cook, to prevail on him to supply Assad with proper food, and attend upon him in whatever he might need. The enemies of the priest accused him to the patriarch, but they could not succeed in getting him disgraced, for the priest is of blameless morals, and has a good name among all.

"The priest now passed much of his time in company with his friend, and conversed with him freely. On a certain occasion they began to converse on the subject of the cross; the priest saying it ought to be worshiped. Assad asked, 'For what reason, and where is the use of it?' The priest said, 'In memory of the Saviour.' Assad asked, 'Why do you kiss the cross, and who has commanded it?' 'We kiss it in honor of him who hung upon it.' 'But why, then, do you not paint the *ass* also, and pay it all obeisance and all honors; for our Saviour, when he rode upon the ass, was in all honor, and all paid him obeisance; but when he was on the cross he was in sorrow and disgrace.' The priest reproved him gently for returning such an answer, and when he saw that the priest was displeased, he said, 'On account of your love to me, and the favor you have done me, I wish to prove to you this point, that all religious reverence and worship and service to any but God is vain; for it is said, "*He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life;*" and I have to beg of you that you will continue your search

of the Holy Scriptures, and pray as David prayed, "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a right spirit within me."'

"During this time one of their enemies was standing without the door, and he listened to the whole conversation. This man went directly to the patriarch, and told him all that he had heard, and that the priest was conversing with Assad in so gentle a manner that he was likely soon to be won over to heresy. His Holiness was startled at the intelligence, and, hastening down, inquired respecting the truth of the report. Assad concealed nothing. The patriarch, however, at first restrained his own feelings, and exhorted him in the most winning manner he could assume, promising that if he would but return to the holy church and the fathers and councils, and would worship the images and saints and the mother of God, he would again immediately make him his secretary. He replied, 'With regard to the opinions which I hold, I assure you I wish to hold none which are opposed to the Word of God, and as to resorting to the Virgin Mary, I say, as I have before said, if she has any power of

intercession, let her intercede for us. As to giving up my opinions to the church and councils, how can I do it so long as I have satisfactory evidence that these councils are opposed to one another? We are in no need of the councils, but have sufficient light without them to guide us in the way of salvation. Moreover, I can say that I *do* surrender my opinions to the holy Catholic Church, for I profess the faith of the true church of Christ, and unite my conscience with it.'

"The patriarch could no longer restrain his feelings, but broke out in the language of reproach, saying, 'You are a worthless fellow, obstinately bent on maintaining your folly. I give you to understand that I am clear of your guilt. You will not be taught, but love to show your contempt of the cross and of the holy images, whose worship is only in honor of those to whose memory they are set up, and who labored and died in the service of Christ.' Assad replied, 'With regard to worshiping such things as these, it is said, "*Thou shalt worship the Lord thy God, and him only shalt thou serve;*" and as to those who labored and shed

their blood for the Saviour, they are above our honors, for they are gone to inherit unspeakable honor and glory in their Master's presence.' The patriarch was now more angry than ever, and taking off his slipper, beat both him and the priest, driving the latter from the room and locking the door.

"After six days of additional confinement, Assad was once more released, through the friendly interposition of the same priest, who again was permitted to have the entire oversight of him."

Here closes the priest's account.

CHAPTER X.

One of Assad's last letters — Indications of failure of intellect and close of life — Death and burial.

HOW long this partial freedom was permitted him is not known, but it is reported that, in 1828, he was visited by his brother Tannoos, and was found once more in a state to call forth the deepest pity; shut up within four solid stone walls, as in a sepulcher "full of all uncleanness." The brother began conversing with him through the small aperture left open in one of the walls, advising and exhorting him as usual to recant, and return to the faith of his fathers. But, instead of consenting to this, Assad commenced preaching to him out of his dungeon, calling upon him to repent and turn to God, reminding him of the passing nature of this world, and the durability of eternity. But Tannoos, unable to endure an interview so

affecting, turned away in tears, and, without bidding him farewell, returned home.

Aside from this incident of the visit of Tannoos to Canobeen, scarcely any thing is known of what may have happened there during this whole year. But we may suppose it was passed much like the one preceding it, with little or no remission of cruelty on the one part or of suffering on the other. It must have been an iron constitution or special divine support that could have enabled the sufferer to meet and outlive all that violence to which his feelings, as well as his bodily frame, were subjected.

How he was in 1829 is very affectingly intimated in a letter of his, written some time in the course of the year, to a friend in Eh-heden; a friend who had previously done much, in a private way, to lighten his afflictions.

He says, "With respect to your brother (meaning himself), at this time of my writing, let me say, that his anger (the patriarch's anger) toward me is intense;* he counteth me unto him as one of his enemies; he hath shut up my way with hewn stone (closed up his door),

* He quotes Job. See chapter xix. 8, 11, 21; and xxvii. 2.

there is no passage-way left me. But my heart cries out, 'God liveth who hath taken away my judgment, and the Almighty, who hath vexed my soul;' and to my brethren I say, 'Have pity upon me, at least, O ye my friends, for all my inward friends have abhorred me, and they whom I loved are turned against me.'

"I have commenced writing this letter to you, O my only brother, with the hope that you will not give sleep to your eyes nor slumber to your eyelids until you come and plead for me with his Blessedness, reminding him how laboriously I toiled for him night and day, for many days, in digesting those ecclesiastical canons which, during all the time of his lamented predecessors, had been nothing but a mass of unintelligible jargon. And I beseech the hearer of prayer, that he will cause the sound of your voice to fall upon the ear of his Blessedness like the voice of the chief butler upon the ears of Pharaoh, which induced him to bring out Joseph from his dark prison, and set him free from his confinement.

"This is my last letter to you. 'My days are passed away as a shadow.' My thoughts

are scattered. The hand of the mighty is fixed with violence upon his prey. More words are not necessary to a brother like yourself, and may the Lord prolong your days."

This was to be, as he supposed, his last letter to his friend. Probably it was so in fact. His friend was unable to procure the relief so earnestly and affectingly implored. He suffered on, and, in no great space of time, according to report, he began to show symptoms of a mind losing its natural powers. And who should wonder at it? For three whole years or more the priestly despot had had him under his crushing heel. He had made it a special study how to inflict upon him the greatest amount of suffering consistent with the continuance of life, and even life itself seems to have been more than once on the point of extinction. How few are the minds that would not have broken down under such a mass of contempt and insult and bodily pain as fell to his lot. The wonder is that, long before this, he had not complained of a shattered intellect, of "*scattered thoughts*," and that he had not given earlier proofs of an imagination run wild with extravagant dreams and visions.

It must have been near a twelvemonth after this that a friend of ours, from the village of Had-et, informed us that the Maronite patriarch had just sent official notice to the Shidiak family of Assad's decease; that he died of a fever on the 25th of October, after an illness of ten days. The family, our informant said, had gone through with the regular mourning ceremonies usual on such occasions, and the surrounding friends and neighbors, including all the princes of the village, had their visits of respect and sympathy, according to custom.

Reports of the death of Assad had often previously come abroad, but none of those reports had been published with so many confirming circumstances as the present. No one of them had come with the signature and seal of the patriarch, and none had been received and acted upon as true by the family and public men of Had-et. Beside, from that day forward, no man was ever found to say that he had visited the prison-convent, and found the prisoner alive. We have, therefore, good reason to believe that his death really occurred at the time specified.

As to the *manner* of his death, it was doubted whether it could have been preceded by so many days of illness as the patriarch had reported; for, if so, the family would, most likely, have been apprised of his approaching end in sufficient season for some of them to have been present. It was more commonly said, by those who were in circumstances to possess correct information on the subject, that the event was sudden, and generally, at that particular moment, unexpected.*

Not to speak of a number of different accounts that came to us varying from that reported by the patriarch, perhaps the following may be given as one of the most reliable. It came from a young man, a devoted Maronite, who was, as he assured us, present with his Holiness at the time of the event in question. The patriarch was not then present at Canobeen, but was in Kesruán, at a distance of more than a day's journey. He there, one day, received an unexpected message from the Emeer

* Tannoos ed Dwyhee gave as the reason of his death, *the filth which accumulated around him* in the cave, and the meagerness of his diet. Letter of Mr. Jessup.

Besheer, saying, "The young man, Assad Shidiak, is demanded of me, and, to save me from farther annoyance about him, you must put him out of the way."

Whether it was really true that the Pasha had made any such demand of the Emeer, or whether the Emeer, expecting that such a demand would be made, either by the Pasha or the consul, took this way to be beforehand with it, remains still in doubt. His Holiness was troubled at the message. He walked the room, and clasped his hands in agitation. How should he get rid of the man? Should he put him to a violent death, — his own former pupil and private secretary? He did hope to get along without going quite so far. Should he let him go free, to corrupt his flock, and give aid and comfort to the Protestants? This would be harder still. So he lifted up his voice to God, and besought him to deliver him out of this dilemma. The prayer, as our informant believed, was heard in heaven, and the next messenger from Canobeen brought his Holiness the agreeable tidings that the "*miserable Rabshoon*" was no more!

Heretic as he was, he could not, of course, be buried in consecrated ground, among the faithful; therefore, after breaking open the door which Pius, the patriarch's mason, had walled up, the body was taken out, and conveyed to a considerable distance from the convent, where it was placed close to the foot of one of the mountain terraces, and the wall of the terrace thrown down upon it. Such was the kind of funeral bestowed upon one to whom we have reason to believe angels had delighted to minister.* Who can tell but that, in another generation, these bones, if they shall have escaped the pillage of the jackal and the panther, may be reverently gathered up and entombed, with a monumental epitaph recording how much suffering popish cruelty may inflict, and how much Christian faith and patience may endure.

* In the account given by Yanni, Tannoos ed Dwyhee testified that "After his death, they drew him out by his feet, like a dog, and threw him in the valley of Canobeen. Some say they buried him in the valley, and some that they threw stones upon him until there was a heap above him, and some that they put him in a cave in the same valley, and the patriarch issued an ecclesiastical order that no one should point out his grave."— *Mr. Jessup's Letter.*

CHAPTER XI.

Reports of Assad's death contradicted — Search of the convent by authority of Ibraheem Pasha — The prisoner not found.

FROM the well-known deceptions practiced in the country, in high places as well as low, there were many who declared their belief that the report of the death of Assad was but a cunning story, got up by the patriarch, simply to prevent any farther attempts, whether by secret plots or by order of the civil authorities, to release him. Even one of the princes of the Shehâb family expressed to the missionaries his confidence that Assad was still alive, his own right reverend patriarch's declarations to the contrary notwithstanding.

In the month of May, 1832, we had residing among us a bold young Scottish merchant, who had been deeply affected, even in his own country, by the cruelties practiced upon Assad; and

had resolved with himself, if it should ever be in his power, to do something for his liberation. He had lived in Egypt, and had obtained a favorable acquaintance with Ibraheem Pasha, who had just then come into power in Syria. Mr. T. determined to *draw a bow at a venture*, as he termed it, and make application to the Pasha for authority to go and search the convent of Canobeen, and have it decided, once for all, whether the prisoner were really dead or still languishing in his dungeon.

On Monday, May 28th, he set out on his doubtful and somewhat dangerous enterprise. He reached the camp of the Pasha, at Acre, on the thirtieth, and was received by his Highness with all the familiarity of an old friend. He listened with deep interest to the account given him by Mr. T., entered zealously into his plan, and ordered the Emeer Besheer, who was present, to furnish him with a guard from his mountain troops, telling the prince that if he objected to doing it, he himself would send a guard from his own Egyptians. The Emeer however complied, and furnished Mr. T. with a written order requiring his son Ameen, whom

he had left in charge at Bteddeen, to supply the required guard. In consequence of bad weather, it was more than a week before Mr. T. reached Bteddeen, and obtained his guard. On the 12th of June he wrote us from Bzibdeen, as follows: —

"A kind Providence has brought us thus far on our journey in peace and safety. The Emeer Besheer had arrived in Bteddeen before me, and wished to retract his orders respecting the guard of soldiers, but he finished by giving way, as he said, on Ibraheem's account. It is evident, from what passed between us, that he is vexed at the enterprise. However, the orders from the Pasha were quite decided, and, in my hearing, accompanied by a threat.

"I am proceeding on Canobeen with ten picked soldiers of the Emeer, who has given us permission, if opposed, to break open the door of the convent, and carry the place by assault. He has hinted darkly, however, that the patriarch has a party. Indeed, this is evident all along the road, as I expected. Druzes, common Christians, and priests tell us, as we meet them on our march, about Assad esh Shidiak

and the patriarch, but no act of hostility has yet taken place. It is plain, however, that they know our object. On examining my men, I find they will likely stand by me in case of extremity; still I hope nothing of this kind will take place."

Mr. T. returned to Beirût on the sixteenth, and gave us the following written account of the remaining part of his expedition: —

"After a journey of four days, over mountains and through defiles, perilous enough to those on horseback, on the evening of the 14th of June we descried the convent of Canobeen. It was situated on the opposite side of a deep ravine, about midway up the almost perpendicular cliff. I confess I was struck with awe when I compared the strength of its position with our little force, in case we should be opposed. It had evidently been a place of strength in former times, and even now could scarcely be taken except by being battered down by cannon from the opposite side of the valley. However, there was no time for reflection, so we marched forward. I got down, as best I could, on one side of the ravine. At the bottom I

found what is, in summer, a rivulet, but in winter a river, and after crossing it on a bridge, my servant, Ahmed, begged me to ascend the other side to the convent on horseback. I objected to this display, especially as it seemed like riding up a wall; but as he assured me there was a safe, circuitous path, we mounted our horses. I rode along, however, with apprehension, the road being a mere foot-path, and constantly along a yawning abyss. I felt my head getting dizzy, but by an effort, directing my eyes and attention to objects above me, I managed to preserve my self-possession. After a great many turns, we got near the convent, where the soldiers, by a shorter path, had already arrived with the letter of the Emeer. I soon saw that we were not to witness an exhibition of the patriarch's heroism in defense of his castle, for we were received, about eighty yards from the convent, by two priests, with attendants and servants, who welcomed us in, and led us at once to the hall of audience.

"I demanded the patriarch. Paolos, a priest, who had apparently resided in Italy, answered, in good Italian, that he was at vespers; but

that as for Assad esh Shidiak, if I wished, I was at liberty to search for him all over the convent; 'But,' said he, 'the man is dead.' Another priest came up, and said, 'I am his relation. I was present here when he died, two years ago.' They begged me to be seated, but I declined. They entreated. I replied that my mission prevented my accepting any thing at their hands. They nevertheless continued entreating, and brought sherbet and pipes, neither of which I would receive. 'What,' said they, 'do you take us for Mohammedans? We are Christians. There is no poison here,' (drinking part of the sherbet). Once more they offered it to me, but I declined it.

"I stood in this manner about half an hour, surrounded by priests and servants, who all kept silence, till, at length the patriarch was announced. I advanced to meet him. On coming up, he appeared troubled. But, recovering himself, he began complimenting me in a profuse and heartless manner. I attempted to interrupt him, but in vain. He kept on. Then suddenly retiring, for what reason I know not, he again appeared, and we all went underneath

the awning. Here he again renewed his compliments, but I succeeded in interrupting him, saying I wished to speak to him one word. 'Speak,' said he. 'By authority from the Emeer Besheer, I require at your hands the person of Assad esh Shidiak.' Here he trembled. 'He died,' said he, 'in this convent, two years ago; but as you may not believe me, Paolos (calling the priest), show this Englishman all over the convent, and open every room in it for his satisfaction, and let two soldiers go with him.'

"It was now dark. Lights and keys were sent for. 'But stop,' said the patriarch, 'show him Assad's grave, and that may save the convent from further search.' 'I shall search,' said I, 'every part of the convent.' The patriarch's agitation increased. The two priests, apparently with tears in their eyes, conjured me to show the patriarch a little respect, on account of the servants.

"Lights and keys and servants were now in attendance, and we began a regular and minute search. The two soldiers, partly to show their zeal for their leader, and partly, perhaps, from

their hunger and fatigue, set about their work in the most boisterous manner, striking with their clubs as they passed every box, chest, and divân, calling out, 'Assad, Assad, come forth!' We examined every room, cavern, and dungeon, the soldiers, notwithstanding my remonstrances, continually shouting, and making the convent ring with Assad's name. The chapel alone I declined entering. We saw the room where the priests said that Assad was confined. They said the door had not been walled up. It was a cell about five feet by four, having no window, but a hole to admit the air, and opening, apparently, into the court. According to them, the disease of which Assad died was dropsy.* I left in the room a paper, on which was written, in Arabic, these words, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors.'

"I remarked to Paolos and the rest that the blood of Assad was on the patriarch's head. 'Did you know Assad?' said Paolos. I answered, 'No.' 'Why, then, do you take so

* They differ from the patriarch.

much interest in him?' 'Because, in England and America, Assad is considered like Paul.' 'This does not concern us. You seem to think Assad was barbarously treated, but I assure you the patriarch is a mild man, and we merely kept Assad a prisoner here.' Another priest said, 'I am his relation, and he was put under my charge, when the patriarch was absent, for months together. Would I have ill treated my relation?'* We had now finished our search, but there was no Assad. 'Shall we now go to his grave?' said Paolos. 'Shall we dig up his bones? Only say so, and we shall instantly comply with your wishes.' I said, 'Show me the grave.'

"Lights were again brought, and the two

* It is altogether astounding to see with what boldness Romish priests can utter such barefaced falsehoods. The above denials of their cruelty to Assad are tolerable specimens of this effrontery. But such is their education. The Bishop of Beirût declares that the Romish Church was never cruel to any body. In his book against Mr. King's Farewell Letter, printed in Rome, 1830, page 59, the bishop has these remarkable words: "*It was never heard of, nor ever found in any book written by a faithful historian, that the Church of Rome ever persecuted any body, or ever assailed any one offensively by violence, or that she ever spilled the blood of any individual, or ever assented to such a deed, from her first existence even until now!*" And this is the same man that threatened Assad with death if he should dare to go and preach his sentiments among his people.

priests accompanied me out of the convent, to what appeared to be a little burying-ground. The way was along several precipices. Paolos took firm hold of my coat, and entreated me to take care and avoid the serpents. We went on cautiously, our lights showing indistinctly the path, and at last came to a part so precipitous that, in spite of my caution, I lost my balance, and should have had a most serious tumble into the ravine had not Paolos held me with all his might. I could not help feeling gratitude for his kindness. On reaching another very steep place, Paolos and the other priest said that they would stop there and wait my return, unless I specially wished them to proceed. I passed the precipice, and a servant pointed me to the grave. I answered, 'It is enough,' for, as I had no means of identifying the remains, I did not think it best to have them disinterred.*

"On my return, they entreated me for a long time to sup and pass the night in the convent, as they said all travelers did. There were wild

* Tannoos ed Dwyhee said to Yannin, "After some days there came to Canobeen certain English Bible-men, and the people lied to them, and took them to a place where he was *not* buried; and the Bible-men wrote above the place, '*Thus die the righteous.*'"

beasts and serpents outside, which might do me injury; perhaps take my life. I told them I could receive nothing from the patriarch, and that positively I would neither eat nor drink nor sleep in his convent. At the same time I gave them to understand that I made a difference between the patriarch and them, for in truth I was affected by their attentions, specially by those of Paolos.* Finding their entreaties ineffectual, they left me."

He passed the night at a little distance from the convent, in the open air, and the next morning started for Beirût, where he arrived on the sixteenth.

In this enterprise of Mr. T., it was an untoward circumstance that he was detained so long at Acre, after his object was made known there. Could he have taken a guard of Egyptian soldiers from the Pasha, and set sail direct from Acre to Tripoli, so as to reach Canobeen in two *days*, instead of two weeks, the result would have been more satisfactory. As it was, the Emeer had abundant time to forewarn the

* This same Paolos, it is said, now occupies the patriarchal chair.

patriarch, and the latter abundant time to despatch his prisoner to another convent, or to another world, long before the search took place. The visit, however, considering all the circumstances, furnished good evidence to substantiate the report that Assad truly died, as has been mentioned, two years before in the convent of Canobeen, a steadfast, unflinching witness to the truth as it is in Jesus.

CHAPTER XII.

Persecution a characteristic of the Romish Church—Promises of Christ, and their faithful fulfillment.

THE treatment of Assad esh Shidiak painfully shows forth one of the most prominent features of the Romish Church, namely, her *spirit* of persecution. This spirit seems to be produced, or at least plausibly defended, by her mode of reasoning. She says, "Peter was the head and pope of the apostles; he was, therefore, head and pope of all the apostles' churches. He was commissioned to feed the sheep and the lambs of Christ; that is, to govern both the priesthood and the people. To fit Peter for this supreme authority, he, and he alone, had the promise of infallibility. "I *have prayed for* THEE *that* THY *faith fail not.*" Peter was exalted to be bishop of Rome, the capital of the world. He died in that city, and, of course, left his dignity and authority to his successors, the future bishops

or popes of Rome. All churches at the first were but parts of Peter's universal church, and this church of Peter has been continued down to the present time, under a regular, unbroken succession of popes. All churches, therefore, not in communion with this church of Peter, must be spurious, unauthorized, heretical, and rebellious."

So she says; and from this reasoning she comes to her conclusion that she ought to proceed against all other churches as against rebellious heretics, and to use with them all manner of discipline to bring them to her own infallible faith. If they are obstinate, she feels perfectly justified in excommunicating and anathematizing them, — visiting them with every kind of annoyance and vexation, even unto prison and to death, in order literally to *compel them to come in* to her only correct, orthodox communion.

Moreover, the above-mentioned reasoner goes on to say, "The pope of Rome, being head of the Christian church, which is intended and destined to embrace all nations, with their kings and all that are in authority, he becomes

the spiritual head and sovereign over the entire human race. Thus, as all other kingdoms are embraced within his, it is no more than his due to be called *king of kings and lord of lords.* He can therefore lawfully require all these inferior kings and lords, as servants, to aid him, when needed, in the execution of his will."

A fully instructed Romanist, therefore, having this view of the Christian system of church government, in looking at the treatment of Assad, sees nothing in it remarkable, nothing but the straightforward execution of church law as established by Christ himself. All the means of discipline used in the case were such as the pope or the patriarch, *who knows he is right*, is bound to use against obstinate heretics *whom he knows to be wrong.* They were in perfect agreement with the sacred and time-worn custom of the true, infallible, apostolic church.

But there are many Romanists and some Protestants who are not thus fully instructed, and who do not believe that such persecution is required by the Romish Church. Assad himself did not, at first, believe it. When he read,

in the Appendix of the Romish Bible, the words, "It is our duty to destroy heretics," he denounced it as a horrible doctrine, a doctrine of the bloody Nero, and was still unwilling to admit that it was a doctrine of his church till it was confirmed to him by the priests of Beirût,* and possibly he did not believe that the doctrine would, in these days, be carried into practice, till he found himself actually in chains.

It should be borne in mind, therefore, that the man whose sufferings are here recorded was not made the victim of any private pique or quarrel between him and the bishop or patriarch, but suffered under a general, infallible, unchangeable law, for such case long since

* The Bishop of Beirût, in his book previously quoted, though in one place he boldly denies that the Romish Church ever persecuted any one, yet in another place has these unblushing lines: "The Romish Church, the mother of all churches, who has true and lawful authority over every Christian by virtue of his baptism (since every baptized person is put in subjection to the church and her appointed officers), is in *duty bound*, through her subordinates, to punish, with ecclesiastical penalties, the disobedient and guilty in things pertaining to salvation and religion, and to hand over those who persist in their errors (and who thus become public nuisances) to the civil authorities, to BE PUNISHED WITH DEATH; and, by consequence, she has the right of compelling them to hold the Catholic faith, and the decrees of the church, *under any penalty whatever*."

made and provided. Here we have clear and practical proof that the principles of modern Romanism are as cruel and vindictive in *our* times as they were when burning men alive was an every-day matter, and when large armies were gathered and sent forth to lay waste whole districts of country where men were found that protested against the Romish Church. The pope *now*, as in time past, lays claim to every baptized person as being a child of his own, whom he has a father's right to educate as he likes, and imbue with such sentiments as he likes. And that he still claims authority over the principalities and powers of the world, we have the testimony of a late Lebanon patriarch.* He does not indeed *enforce*, at present, all his pretended rights. He does not burn and torture and stir up war to the same extent as formerly; but the reason is not that he thinks it unlawful or unjust so to do. It would be against the strong spirit of the age. The powers that be are not so subservient as they were,

* The Syrian Catholic patriarch. In a public proclamation of his, he says, "We yield subjection to the pontiff of Rome, and acknowledge him not merely as bishop of that city, but as general governor and head of the *whole habitable globe*."

and his enemies have, for a time, got the ascendency. But he has never given up his pretended rights. He is only waiting his opportunity. Let but the various Protestant nations become proud and unbelieving, and provoke God to scatter their power, and, without a doubt, those wars and fires and tortures will be quickly renewed.

But we may hope in God that these mementoes of those dark generations when the Church of Rome had her full sway, will never be renewed, and that a church which burns the Bible; which teaches salvation by works of law; which shuts Christ out of view by putting in his place an image, a cross, the Virgin Mary, and the bread of the mass; which practically teaches unconditional pardon by the priest; which singles out the most godly among men as the special objects of its hate; which, in a word, is directly anti-Christian in so many important respects, may never recover its former ability to vex the earth by filling it with violence and blood.

Another instructive lesson is taught us by the case of our martyred brother, which is, that

our blessed Lord is faithful to his promises. He did not declare to his disciples that all men should hate them, and that whosoever should kill them would think that he did God service, and then leave them under the effects of so discouraging a speech. He promised to be with them, and that his grace should be sufficient for them.

And they found his promise true. Through this promised grace they "took pleasure in reproaches, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake." Through this, they were ready "not to be *bound* only, but also to *die* for the name of the Lord Jesus." They rejoiced "that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for his name," and at midnight, while they lay with bleeding backs, and feet in the stocks, they made their prison room ring with songs of joy. Thus they experienced the fulfillment of the Saviour's promises of grace.

And what but this promised grace could have sustained our martyred brother through such a prolonged course of injury and abuse? In all this endurance we hear nothing of his disrespect, either in word or deed, toward his pa-

triarch, nor of his anger against his inferior tormentors. He utters no threat, nor any passionate defiances. When smitten he calls no man a "whited wall," though he might have pleaded an apostolic example. When accused, he does not "begin to curse and swear," much less does he show a spirit to smite with the sword, or to call down fire from heaven. His meekness, humility, and patience were beyond all the power of his enemies to overcome. He might expostulate, and say, "Why smitest thou me?" but so did his divine Master. He might earnestly petition to be delivered from his confinement, but so did the pious Joseph. He might exclaim, in his agony, "Have pity upon me, oh ye my friends," but the most patient of men did the same. He suffered a long and lingering death, maintaining to the last the forgiving spirit, and uttering the dying language of his divine Lord, and of the martyr Stephen.

Such a death was a splendid triumph of grace, — a triumph worth all the suffering which achieved it. It commended the blessed gospel; it brought joy to many a pious heart; it exposed to public execration the spirit of a wicked

priesthood; it awakened many a thoughtless soul to earnest religious inquiry; in fine, it eminently contributed to bring forth that which is the true end and aim of all Christian labors and sufferings, GLORY TO GOD!

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